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WHEN NATURAL PHENOMENA ENTER  
THE SYMBOLIC SPHERE:  
AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON RITUAL TEXTS  
WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN FUNERARY CULT

ERIKA MEYER-DIETRICH

*Summary*

This article presents a new approach in the study of the ecology of religion. Single ecological factors that appear as subject matter in religious sources are analyzed as factors in the religious world. The symbolic value is applied to environmental factors through ritualization. The natural phenomenon of the inundation of the river Nile was a regular event in ancient Egypt. To investigate the reproduction and use of this ecological factor in religious ritual a model has been developed called “The Dynamic Ecology of Religion.” This model and its theoretical and hermeneutical basis are outlined, some methodological considerations are made, and the explanatory value of the model discussed.

*Introduction*

The ecology of religion attempts to understand the connection between the physical environment and people’s religious ideas about it. In his article “Ecological approaches to the study of religion,”<sup>1</sup> Herbert Burhenn categorizes a number of approaches into those that trace out mono-directional causation and those that describe functional relationships with feedback loops. Common to both types of approaches is that they try to explain religious beliefs and practices as functional elements in an ecosystem or as elements in a religious pattern that mirrors ecological conditions. Contrary to these approaches, the method that is the subject of this article does not deal with an ecosystem. The point of departure is single ecological factors that appear in a religious

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<sup>1</sup> Burhenn 1997:111–126.

context. The model, which I presented for the first time in my doctoral dissertation,<sup>2</sup> is called “The Dynamic Ecology of Religion.” It was developed to serve two ends: (1) as a method for case studies it should facilitate the investigation of ecological factors which appear in a certain religion as situational variability, and (2) it should help to explain their adaptational function when they are treated symbolically. Generally, the adaptational function is one of meaning-making and can result in religious symbolism. As such it helps people to adapt to their environment. The main sources were ritual texts from the Egyptian funerary cult in which the inundation of the river Nile is mentioned. Moreover, there exist sources for the Egyptian view of the yearly inundation and its effects on the inhabitants of the Nile valley during their lifetime. Due to these sources the natural phenomenon of the Nile flood provides a good example to examine differences in the symbolic treatment of an ecological factor in different situations. As criteria for the approach the following may be mentioned: (1) It should be designed to fit the interactive dynamics that characterize the relationship between the performer of religious acts and his environment; (2) it should account for differences in the symbolic interpretation of an ecological factor within the same culture.

In this article I shall, first, describe the theoretical basis of the Dynamic Ecology of Religion; secondly, make some methodological considerations regarding textual sources; and, finally, discuss the explanatory value of the model having the results of its application in hand.

### *Theoretical Basis*

The first ecological question that should be posed to any source material that stems from a religious context<sup>3</sup> is whether ecological fac-

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<sup>2</sup> Meyer-Dietrich 2001.

<sup>3</sup> A religious context of the source material is given if its content alludes to religious symbolism, if it is located in a sanctified area, if at least one or several gods are addressed, if the material is anchored in a religious ritual context, or if the material is included in religious co-texts or iconography or else used within a community for religious purposes.

tors are present. If the answer is yes, these religio-symbolical features will appear within a symbolic context. How do they enter the religious sphere? According to the object-relation-theory of the psychologist Paul Pruyser, symbolic objects are situated in the intermediate space that connects people to their environment. This is the space where imagination, cultural needs, creativity, and symbols are located. There “lies the opportunity to play and to engage in symbolic transactions, shared with and supported by other civilized people (. . . *symbolic* used in the sense given them by Tillich, namely that they participate in the power to which they point).”<sup>4</sup> The theory’s capacity to be used within the field of ecology derives from the fact that this sphere, in Pruyser’s terminology, “the Illusionistic World,”<sup>5</sup> is the sphere “which alone is capable of creating the ideals that may and should improve the conditions under which we live.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore the symbolic interpretation of ecofactors can be regarded as evidence of an adaptational, viz. meaning-making process, that has taken place. In addition to the psychosocial function of the Illusionistic World that gives access to the environment and thereby relates people to it, objects are taken from the realistic world to furnish the symbolic sphere:

Moreover, we should acknowledge that perceptions of the realistic world — people, animals, plants, mountains, seas, and the firmament, as well as human artefacts such as buildings, tools, works of art, laboratoria, temples and graves — are necessary stimuli for setting the process of imagination in motion and for providing it with ‘stuff’ to work on.<sup>7</sup>

By taking in “stuff” from the real world to be used in the symbolic World of Religion the theory opens the way for comparison. Natural phenomena can be compared with their religious interpretation. Valerie DeMarinis has connected Catherine Bell’s ritual theory to Pruyser’s

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<sup>4</sup> Pruyser 1991:177.

<sup>5</sup> Pruyser’s term “Illusionistic World” is heavily compromised. Some problems with regard to Freud’s legacy concerning religion are taken up by DeMarinis in her article (see DeMarinis 1997:168).

<sup>6</sup> Pruyser 1991:186.

<sup>7</sup> Pruyser 1991:185.

model: "Religious ritual experience provides both a literal and symbolic context for expression of the Illusionistic World's intermediate function."<sup>8</sup> By this DeMarinis creates the theoretical conditions that correspond with the demands for a model within an ecology of religion, viz. the mutual interaction of people and environment.<sup>9</sup>

Bell's understanding of rituals as practice makes it possible to integrate the existing environment into the ecological model as an actual context that plays a crucial role for the symbolic interpretation of eco-factors. As practice, a ritual contains all the general aspects of human action: It is, depending on the situation, strategic, motivated, and goal orientated. Its efficiency is evaluated according to its purpose.<sup>10</sup> An everyday action turns into a symbolic one by ritualization, which is "a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities."<sup>11</sup> One of the most striking differences between daily actions and ritual actions is sacredness. In its ritual aspect sacredness is a quality that creates a value-laden distinction and contrasts sacred acts with profane ones as being more important or powerful. With regard to religion, power is conferred on supernatural beings in accordance with the degree of ritualization:

The degree to which activities are ritualized . . . is the degree to which the participants suggest that the authoritative values and forces shaping the occasion lie beyond the immediate control or inventiveness of those involved.<sup>12</sup>

Bell emphasizes the centrality of the body. Ritualization is always an answer to an actual situation in which the present is defined. In a ritual the body mediates the once embodied structures:

Yet a focus on the acts themselves illuminates a critical circularity to the body's interaction with this environment: generating it, it is molded by it in turn. By virtue of this circularity, space and time are redefined through the

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<sup>8</sup> DeMarinis 1997:176.

<sup>9</sup> DeMarinis 1997:172.

<sup>10</sup> Bell 1992:81.

<sup>11</sup> Bell 1992:74.

<sup>12</sup> Bell 1997:169.

physical movements of bodies projecting organizing schemes on the space-time-environment on the one hand while reabsorbing these schemes as the nature of reality on the other. In this process such schemes become socially instinctive automatisms of the body and implicit strategies for shifting the power relationships among symbols.<sup>13</sup>

In this process the ritual agent himself builds up the symbolic environment. The ritual environment and the agent reciprocate. Thereby the ritual agent gains a new understanding of his environment, which in turn leads to a new understanding of himself. Redefining space and time through the physical movements of bodies enables the ritual agent to construct relationships of authority and submission and thereby to relate to his environment in an altered, nuanced way.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to Bell, for an analysis within the ecology of religion to be carried out the interest has to be moved from the body to the environment. The ritual agent as producer of the symbolic environment is presupposed. The ritually produced environment becomes the object of the study. It can be taken as the observable result of a dynamics that take place to cope with and adapt to reality. With the environment in focus, the following questions are raised: Which ecological factors are reproduced in the symbolic microcosm? In which phase of the ritual process do they appear? In which contexts they are used? The symbolic meaning of the factors is goal orientated and can therefore be related to the intended effect of the ritual. What is the purpose of the ritual act?

### *The model of the Dynamic Ecology of Religion*

With reference to Figure 1, it is possible to understand the three different spheres involved in the interaction. The outer one is the *Environment* or *Habitat*, the inner one is the *Person* and the middle one, connecting both, is the *World of Religion*.

The *Environment* or *Habitat* is one that could be in accordance with the actual situation. The situation is one that motivates, stimulates, or triggers the ritual process for the *Person*. Because there is no 'reality'

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<sup>13</sup> Bell 1992:99.

<sup>14</sup> Bell 1997:82.

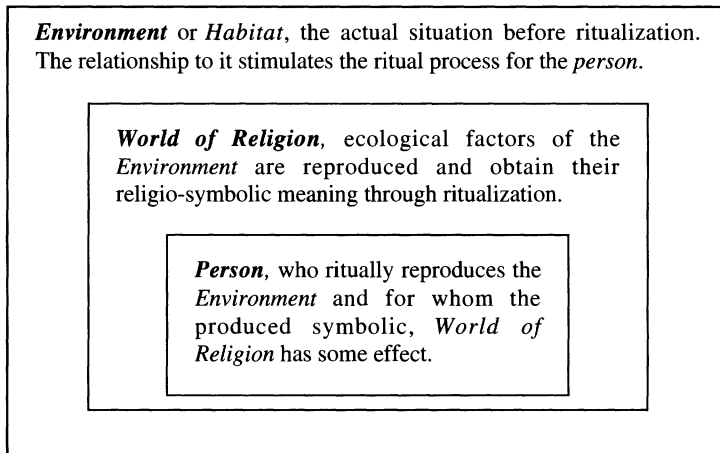


Figure 1. Model of the Dynamic Ecology of Religion.

available that is not described in symbolic terms,<sup>15</sup> the most one can say about the *Environment* is that it corresponds to the situation before ritualization starts. From this it follows that the sources for the *Environment* must represent ecological factors coming from a context other than the situation under investigation. Due to this condition one has to look for other available sources that testify to the use of the same ecological factors, and which can be used for comparison. In order to compare the interpretation of ecofactors in the *Environment* with the interpretation of and emphasis on them when they are used in the *World of Religion*, one has to ask whether the sources for the *Environment* are evidence for a different textual, ritual, or iconographical context *within the same culture*. The choice of factors that are reproduced in the *World of Religion* is based on the cultural value already bestowed on them before the ritualization in question. This cultural value is the specific knowledge a *Person* has at her disposal thanks to her cultural disposition, and which she can use for ritualization. Considering this, what ritual does is a question of how ecofactors are used rather than a question of radical change.

<sup>15</sup> Symbolic systems are culture, art, and science as well as religion.



The *Person* is the one who ritually reproduces the *Environment* and for whom the produced symbolic *World of Religion* has some effect. The concept of the *Person* is a human being who uses cognitive and creative abilities, who is dependent on the conditions of a specific time and place, and who employs her culture-specific disposition including embodied ritual mastery. Following Bell, the goal of ritualization is always an alteration of power relationships:

People reproduce relationships of power and domination, but not in a direct, automatic, or mechanistic way; rather, they reproduce them through their particular construal of those relations, a construal that affords the actor the sense of a sphere of action, however minimal.<sup>16</sup>

This change in the sphere of action has two consequences: Firstly, ritualization sees the appearance of a new *Person*, who can come to terms with given circumstances. Secondly, during the ongoing process of ritualization, the *Person* appropriates a field of action:

Ritual mastery, that sense of ritual which is at least a basic social mastery of the schemes and strategies of ritualization, means not only that ritualization is the appropriation of a social body but that the social body in turn is able to appropriate a field of action structured in great measure by others.<sup>17</sup>

The object of the study is the *World of Religion*. Here the adaptation to 'reality' takes place and can be studied. The source material of this sphere will be treated as ritual action. The ritually produced symbolic environment will be understood as the field of action, strategically necessary for the ritualization in a given situation. Due to the fact that the result of a successful ritual act is identical with its intended goal, the latter can be used as an analytical entity at which the produced symbolism aims. *Qua* symbolic world, the function of religion is to relate such an idea of the *Environment* to people so that they can integrate, live, act and communicate in it, with their personality intact. To attain this effect, personal factors and ecofactors are chosen, rearranged, and orchestrated in order to work as symbols for the ritual agent. Personal

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<sup>16</sup> Bell 1992:84.

<sup>17</sup> Bell 1992:215.

factors are not a subject of study, though their importance in ritualization shall not in any respect be denied or reduced. Only the new *Person*, for whom the ritually created environment has some effect, is of interest for the investigation within ecology. Of all the factors which are reproduced in the *World of Religion*, only those that *are tied to their environment* are the subjects of an ecological study. The reproduced ecofactors obtain their religio-symbolic meaning through ritualization. The ritual agent employs culture-specific and traditionally known models for the symbolic treatment of ecofactors. If only isolated ecofactors are used, then it is theoretically possible that the *World of Religion* includes only parts of the *Environment*. If the ritually generated space consists of a room, which is also designed and equipped as such in a concrete manner, then a new ritual process can activate the room. In the meantime it represents a potentially ritual room. Rituals are limited in time. During the resting periods between religious rituals, the religious symbolism of the room can fade and other functions can dominate the building or area. If it is supposed that no desacralization of the room has taken place, the area can continue to exist as a holy space for a *Person*. As such, it can stimulate a *Person* and can serve to prepare her for a new ritual action. The investigation within ecology takes into consideration the ritual space and room as the religio-symbolic world in a ritualization process.

### *Methodological Considerations*

The interaction of *Person* and *Environment* can be confirmed through texts. Texts, when understood as operative speech-acts, viz. performatives, can be treated and investigated as ritual actions in their own right. As such they have all the properties of ritualized practice (see above).

### *Situation*

Like any practice, ritualization is dependent on the situation, which motivates it as the appropriate action to cope with the *Environment*. Texts, which historically have their *Sitz im Leben* in contexts other than a ritual one, are also treated as actions by speech that are used for

<b>Motivation</b> The action by speech is given through the cultural disposition and the cultural frame →	<b>Situation</b> The speaker acts in a situation which motivates ritualization as the appropriate action to cope with the <i>Environment</i> ↓
<b>Ritualization</b> By structuring, editing, and compilation of the texts as well as formalization of the used language, and in written documents choice of material, layout, and design →	<b>Strategy</b> Is the speaking and hearing of performatives, viz. operative speech-acts that reproduce personal and ecological factors and thereby alter the relationship between <i>Person</i> and <i>Environment</i> ↓
<b>Effectiveness</b> Leads to new self-esteem ←	<b>Goal</b> The theme underlying all texts is the production of a new existential situation for the <i>Person</i>

Figure 2. The analysis of operative texts as ritual actions.

ritualization. In other words, the ritual situation has priority over other historic-critical contexts of textual sources. The speaker of religious texts attributes a certain religious symbolism to ecological factors. This symbolism is understood as the result of a ritualization that takes place and is located in the situation proper. In contrast, dislocation from its ritual situation deprives a speech-act of its context-dependent function and, consequently, of its actual symbolic value. An example of this dislocation is Fenn's examination of religious utterances in court. In *Liturgies and Trials: The Secularization of Religious Language* he demonstrates in the court case 'In the Matter of Karen Ann Quinlan' that "the illocutionary force of Catholic dogma is reduced from strong to weak directives, from declarations to clarifications, and from directives to statements of mere opinion or personal belief."<sup>18</sup> Fenn exemplifies that it is the situationality that frames the symbolic value with which a religious language is loaded. Ritual performed exclusively by speech-acts is to be seen as a highly stylized way of ritual activity. In this respect, ritualization is an action that can

<sup>18</sup> 18 Fenn 1982:127.

only be accomplished by ritual mastery, viz. by using conventionally appropriate means (see below). If conventionality no longer supports circumstances under which speech-acts are operative, then symbols will lose their ritually maintained value. A change of situation is followed by a change of symbolic value, whether or not texts are used within a ritual.

### Motivation

The motivation for acting by speech originates from given circumstances. It is enhanced or limited by the respective cultural frame. According to Bell, the motivation confirms the Redemptive Hegemony, that is, “the way in which reality is experienced as a natural weave of constraint and possibility, the fabric of day-to-day dispositions and decisions experienced as a field for strategic action.”<sup>19</sup> This culturespecific field for action is important for two reasons: (1) It allows a general possibility of action. Within the Egyptian funerary cult the source materials were coffin texts. These could be analyzed as ritual actions because of the Egyptian idea of death as an interim form of existence that precedes life, and the idea that perception and action are possible for a person in its state of death. (2) As a cultural disposition it defines the negotiable field of action for the *Person*. The symbolism of the texts that can be observed results from a *Person*’s negotiation with the *Environment*. Therefore, the speech-acts try to establish a field of action to allow the *Person* an altered existential situation, using different speakers and addressees, construals of wishes, orders and acceptance by modes of speech, and distinctions between direct and indirect performed actions.

### Ritualization

Ritualization motivates structuring, edition, and compilation of the texts as well as formalization of the used language, and in written documents, choice of material, layout, and design. Ritualization consists of the proper acting, viz. composing and editing performative texts in

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<sup>19</sup> Bell 1992:84.

a certain way. In speech-acts the ritualization proper cannot be represented by body-movements. Nevertheless, my textual sources showed a restructuring of the *Environment* when there is a ritual reading of the ecofactors. The Environment is reproduced by the speaker, the ritual agent, through speech-acts and thereby altered or nuanced. In the construction of the text three ways of action are responsible for this reproduction:

- a) *Structuring* determines the position of the rendered ecofactors within the entire speech-act. That is why the performatives have to be analyzed in chronological order and the entire process of ritualization has to be reconstructed for the investigation.
- b) *Edition* is the choice, emphasis, and characteristics of the reproduced ecofactors, integrated in the text, and as such, edition organizes the field of action that the speaker appropriates.
- c) *Compilation* creates the intratextual contexts, that is, the association of the ecofactors with other speech-acts.

Formalization of the used language consists of a way of speaking that contrasts with profane speech. It can be attained by formalization of language, e.g., by using an old, an artificial, or a highly stylized language. Furthermore, in written documents, the ritual agent can make use of formal aspects such as the choice of certain enduring or precious materials, a change in size and style of the letters, coloring, a special script, illuminations, etc. The authority that is conferred on the speaker, e.g., juridical persons, gods, several persons talking together, or repetition, can intensify the ritual density of the acts. The examined ritual texts were written on the interior of a woman's coffin. As culture-specific ways of formalization could be observed: Different colorful types of ink denote different areas in the ritually created cosmos. The Egyptian device called *honorific anticipation*<sup>20</sup> is used to express cultural values. The customary order of text columns is reversed to mark liminality.

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<sup>20</sup> Hieroglyphic signs referring to the divine or royal sphere preceded in the writing any other sign belonging to the same compound noun, independently of their syntactic positions.

## Strategy

The text *is* the action. To reach the goal of ritualization as strategy, the speaking and hearing of performative speech-acts is used. Speaking and hearing build a dialogue equivalent to the interaction between *Person* and *Environment*. Through reproduction of personal and ecological factors in operative speech-acts that are heard, the relationship between *Person* and *Environment* is negotiated and altered. It goes without saying that proof is required as to whether or not the texts function as speech-acts. Ritual criticism is in place: "Employed as hermeneutical principle, the idea of ritual becomes a metaphor, a tool to 'think by,' a way of conceiving aspects of human experience, if not the world itself."<sup>21</sup> Following Wörner, performatives are non-verbal conventional modes of action that might, but need not necessarily, involve the use of language and other linguistic conventions for their felicitous accomplishment.<sup>22</sup> In ritual actions, conventionality is guaranteed by ritual mastery:

The ability to produce schemes that hierarchize and integrate in complex ways is part and parcel of the practical knowledge acquired in and exercised through ritualization. The ultimate purpose of ritualization is . . . nothing other than the production of ritualized agents, persons who have an instinctive knowledge of these schemes embedded in their bodies, in their sense of reality, and in their understanding of how to act in ways that both maintain and qualify the complex microrelations of power. . . . With these same schemes the activities of ritualization generate historical traditions, geographical systems, and levels of professionals.<sup>23</sup>

As a rule speech-acts are interpersonal acts creating a network of social relations that establish and maintain a certain degree of acknowledgement.<sup>24</sup> Judith Butler's treatment of performatives helps to explain the application of the sources as dialogue and interaction

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<sup>21</sup> Grimes 1990:21.

<sup>22</sup> Wörner 1978:89.

<sup>23</sup> Bell 1992:221.

<sup>24</sup> Wörner 1978:82.

within religious ritual where participants were addressed on different ontological levels:

Language sustains the body not by bringing it into being or feeding it in a literal way; rather, it is by being interpellated within the terms of language that a certain social existence of the body first becomes possible.<sup>25</sup>

In the Egyptian sources under investigation, their performative function was indicated by characteristics of Egyptian writing such as potentially effective pictograms, a syntax that can express cultural values, the Egyptian idea of the creative character of words, formulas that mark parts of the texts as both spoken and heard words, the use of direct speech, and grammatical features such as imperatives and optatives. The situation should, as the speech, indicate the text's ritual function. As elements within the funerary cult as their *Sitz im Leben*, the texts' ritual function was substantiated by the number and position of the speakers, the localization and the formalization of the texts, and through the materials used.

## Goal

Goal orientation is the analytical entity with which the symbolism is aligned. It will be used as the test case for a procedure appropriate to produce a functional ritual environment that defines the present situation in such a way that it creates a new *Person*. Thus questions arise for the text-analysis: How is the *Environment* remodelled, and what is the effect of this on the *Person*? The ritualization is successful if it leads to new self-esteem. Statements in the source material that affirm the intended purpose can eventually support the accomplishment of the ritual action. The theme underlying all the texts is the production of a new existential situation for the *Person*. Subthemes can denote steps within the process of ritualization.

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<sup>25</sup> Butler 1997:5.

*The results of the investigation of ritual texts within the Egyptian funerary cult*

The model was developed for a case study undertaken to investigate the symbolism of the inundation of the river Nile in ancient Egyptian religion. The religious symbolism of this ecofactor was studied in three different sources.

The first one, the *Hymn of the Nile*, represents the *Environment*. It could be shown that the hymn describes the actual course of the inundation as it took place in pharaonic Egypt. The inundation was metaphorically<sup>26</sup> treated as a person who develops like a child in the womb and delivers a multitude of beings and products when the waters have reached the ideal maximum level. The relationship between the Egyptian people and the ecofactor that dominated their lives was one of submission. The inundation, personified as the god Hapi, could not be dealt with other than by accepting submission, recognizing the strength of his will, the power of his might, the unlimited extension of the water over the area, and the effects of the flood. The only option for the inhabitants of the Nile region was to welcome the event and show solidarity with the king who was responsible for the offerings to the gods.

The second source, texts on the interior of a coffin, represents in this case the *World of Religion* for a woman who wants to unite her present dominion, the region of the dead, with the region of the living. Ritualizing, she reproduces step by step the whole cosmos as a field of action. The ways in which the inundation was dealt with in the *Hymn of the Nile* and in the reshaped ritual environment in the coffin, were in both texts metaphorically represented in religio-symbolic terms as the god Hapi. Although the same effects of the inundation are described, viz. by describing it as life-giver for the whole country, and ruler over all existing ontological and cosmological dominions, a striking

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<sup>26</sup> My use of the term “metaphor” is based on Lakoff. The personification of an ecological event, viz. the yearly inundation of the river Nile is understood as an ontological metaphor, which allows people to make sense of this natural phenomenon in human terms. See Lakoff and Johnson 1980:34.



difference is how the *Person* relates to this ecological factor. During her lifetime, the Nile flood limits a *Person's* control over her existential situation. Within the funerary cult the flood affects the *Person's* field of action and leads to an enlargement of her existential space. The ecofactor is reproduced in such a way that it allows the *Person* to obtain the offerings she needs for her livelihood. She employs the flood to activate her and to pass from one region to another, to be protected, to gain orientation, continuity, power, and autonomy. The results of the comparison can be interpreted as differences that are caused by different ritual situations and demonstrate the situationality of the speech-acts.

The third type of source material was coffin texts in which a *Person* identifies herself with the god Hapi. It was examined in order to test the results so far obtained in the study. Comparison of the results from the studies of the two coffins shows nuances in the treatment of the ecofactor even when the situation and the goal of the ritual action are identical. Assuming the role of Hapi, the personification of the inundation, the *Person* creates an analogy that builds up the *Person's* self-esteem as a body that can interact with different cosmic regions by exercising bodily movements. Variations in the treatment of the inundation under similar ritual conditions could be interpreted as nuances in the ritualization. The reasons for the latter have not been further investigated. They could be caused by different local traditions, changes in history, the choice of another of several existing cultural models, or adjustment to the personal conditions of the ritual agent, as can be the case when texts from the royal funerary cult are taken over by private people, or texts previously used by males are appropriated by women.

### *Contribution and applications*

The contribution of the Dynamic Ecology of Religion to religious studies can be summarized as follows: Beginning with ecological factors in the religious source material, the Dynamic Ecology of Religion starts from the occurrence of factors and does not presuppose an influence of the *habitat* on religious institutions. Certain religio-symbolical

features that appear in the sources are considered as evidence of an adaptational process that has taken place. The investigation of single ecofactors in a given situation can, together with the symbolic reading of ecofactors from different contexts, further the understanding and picture of a religion. The model is designed to fit the dynamics taking place in adaptive processes. Therefore ecofactors and their symbolism are not fixed as constants, and can be grasped in addition to changes and new formations. The dynamics are responsible for a different conception of the environment and not just its mirror. Adaptation to the environment is understood as a meaning-making activity. The latter is performed by persons who share a common culture-specific disposition which enables them to engage in ritual actions, to employ available ideas of ecofactors, and to use them for reinterpretation in symbolic models. In the above approach religion is functionally conceived as the result of human action in a dialectical process in order to integrate a person into her environment.

The Dynamic Ecology of Religion opens up for the analysis of texts as ritual action. Texts, when understood as operative speech-acts, can be treated and investigated as ritual actions in their own right. The point I want to make is that texts within a ritual context are treated neither as accompanying ritual performances — as was the case in the Cambridge myth-and-ritual school, or in Tambiah's approach to ritual<sup>27</sup> — nor mainly as communication, but as the ritual actions proper. The text *is* the action. As such, texts possess all the criteria that characterize ritualized practice. With the results of a ritual process in the Egyptian funerary cult at hand, it could be shown that the method allows for an analysis of a situationally given practice that employs speech-acts to reach its goal. This goal consists in an altered existential condition for the agent, combined with new self-esteem. The dependency of a speech-act on the situation furthers a more detailed understanding of ecological factors that are employed in different ritual contexts within the same culture.

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<sup>27</sup> For an overview of the use of speech-act theories in the study of ritual see Grimes 1990:195.

Comparison of the different treatments of an ecofactor makes it possible to improve the inner-cultural perspectives. Variations in the symbolic treatment of the same ecological factor in different contexts can be studied. Situationally caused differences in the Egyptian sources are, e.g.: (1) The reversed order of the four cardinal points and the activity that marks a new life cycle within the final season instead of at the beginning of a year, due to the different cosmological regions in which the *Person* resides when ritualizing. (2) The activity of the ecofactor: In the Nile valley the inundation is an active dominant ecofactor, while within the funerary cult the inundation is an incorporated power that acts as a catalyst and activates the *Person*. Details in the treatment of the inundation within the same context are obvious in the nuanced interaction between *Person* and *Environment* as it is described in the two coffins. In one coffin the *Person*, having been transformed into the sun's tears, asks as a "flood" for the opening of the gates of the horizon, while in the other coffin the *Person* wants to enter Egypt as the embodiment (Ba) and the shadow of the god Hapi.

The wide definition of ecofactors in the presented ecological model only takes into account the fact that they are tied to the *Environment* and that the *Person* is referring to them. This is seen as an advantage, because the definition allows for the investigation of an interaction between non-human environmental factors and human beings, and interactions of persons at the same time. The latter was the case in the Egyptian material where the interaction took place between persons and gods, viz. personifications. Because of the Dynamic Ecology of Religion's wide scope it can be applied to detailed questions regarding a *Person* and her relationship to single phenomena, powers, persons, objects, etc. in her *Environment*.

The explanatory value of the Dynamic Ecology of Religion lies in the possibility of enriching the spectrum of understanding of culture-specific interactions, both within the field of historical research and in modern societies. The symbolic interpretation of ecofactors in a people's environment becomes pressing when environmental issues are treated symbolically and applied politically in environmental move-

ments, or when people have to negotiate among conflicting alternatives in a pluralistic culture.

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# ÜBERLEGUNGEN ZU EINEM KULTFEST DER ALTMESOPOTAMISCHEN GÖTTIN INANNA \*

BARBARA BÖCK

## *Summary*

The present study aims at interpreting a Sumerian hymn pertaining to the cult of the ancient Mesopotamian goddess of love and war, Inanna / Ištar. Though this literary composition belongs to the realm of royal religion, and centres on the relationship between the goddess and the royal personage, the hymn also provides an insight into a cultic feast of rather popular character. The text describes a ritual; its inner logic follows the course of a cultic ceremony. Accordingly, the term “implicit ritual” as opposed to “explicit ritual”, or liturgical order, can be applied. Until now the Sumerian hymn in question has been treated mainly from a text critical point of view. Certain aspects of the ritual performance, viz. the playful change of gender roles, are expressed through the epithets of the goddess. Recently, attention has been given to those epithets that allude to the power of the goddess to change her sex, and it has been proposed that they show a shamanistic side of the goddess. In what follows we shall put forward an alternative interpretation of the change of gender roles by using the concept of play and game as intrinsic to a religious system. The cultic feast of the goddess Inanna / Ištar will thus be traced back to a ritual of inversion which serves to reconstitute the moral and social order as well as to consolidate religious belief. Since our hymn is considered to be one of the main sources for the reconstruction of the so-called “sacred marriage” we shall also touch upon this ancient rite.

## *1. Einleitung*

Einblick in die längst vergangene Vorstellungswelt, Religion und Weltdeutung des altmesopotamischen Menschen gewährt uns in hervorragender Weise sein verschriftetes Erzählgut. Grundlegend für eine Rekonstruktion des religiösen Lebens im alten Zweistromland

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\* Der vorliegende Artikel stellt die überarbeitete Fassung meines Habilitationsvortrages dar, der unter dem Titel “Mit wem verbrachte der König die Nacht der ‘Heiligen Hochzeit’?” am 27.11.2002 am Fachbereich der Kultur- und Geschichtswissenschaften der Freien Universität Berlin gehalten wurde.

sind Gebete und Hymnen, mythologische Erzählungen und Rituale in sumerischer und akkadischer Sprache<sup>1</sup>, zu denen sich Informationen aus administrativen Dokumenten über Tempelverwaltung und Götterversorgung gesellen<sup>2</sup>. Listenförmige Handbücher mit Aufzählungen von Götternamen und Priesterberufen schließlich lassen die Komplexität sumerisch-akkadischer Religion erahnen<sup>3</sup>. Neben die Textzeugen treten als archäologische Hinterlassenschaften Bauten, die dem Kult dienten wie Schreine oder Tempelanlagen, und bildhafte Darstellungen von Göttern oder Kultobjekten.

Im Mittelpunkt unserer Ausführungen steht der Hymnus “Iddin-Dagān A” an die Göttin Inanna in ihrer Erscheinung als Abendstern. Die Komposition erwähnt als Teilnehmer des Kultfestes den Herrscher Iddin-Dagān (ca. 1974–1954 v. Chr.), einen König aus einer Dynastie, die in der Stadt Isin ansässig war. Der Text zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass sich seine innere Logik nach dem Ablauf eines Rituals oder einer Zeremonie richtet, so dass der Hymnus zur Rekonstruktion eines kultischen Festes herangezogen werden kann, das im Kult der Göttin zentral ist. Dadurch hebt sich das Werk von dem Gros der Preislieder an die Göttin ab, die deskriptive Eulogien darstellen und keine konkret fassbaren Hinweise auf eine zeremonielle Einbettung liefern. Um diese Art von Hymnen auch terminologisch von den reinen Preisliedern abzusetzen, führte B. Groneberg die Bezeichnung “implizites Ritual” im Gegensatz zu einem “expliziten Ritual” ein, die im folgenden adoptiert wird<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. Liturgische Anweisungen und Rituale

Der Begriff “Ritual” wird hier allerdings unter Vorbehalt benutzt: Grundsätzlich gilt, dass eines der konstitutiven Elemente von Ritualen

<sup>1</sup> S. für einen Überblick zur sumerischen Literatur Krecher 1978 und Edzard 1987–1990; zur akkadischen Literatur s. Rölli 1987–1990.

<sup>2</sup> S. etwa die Rekonstruktion des Kultkalenders der Herrscher der 3. Dynastie von Ur auf der Basis von administrativen Texten Sallaberger 1993.

<sup>3</sup> S. beispielsweise die Götterliste “An: Anum”, s. Litke 1998; für sog. Berufslisten vgl. die Übersicht von Cavigneaux 1980–1983:613–614.

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. Groneberg 1996:291.

die Durchführung (*act of performance*) darstellt<sup>5</sup>. Es mag überflüssig sein, auf diesen Aspekt hinzuweisen, doch scheint die Inflation des Begriffs den Hinweis auf seinen vorsichtigen Gebrauch nötig zu machen. So sind die “expliziten Rituale” des alten Mesopotamiens in Form von Instruktionen zur ihrer Durchführung auf uns gekommen. Es handelt sich dabei streng genommen um liturgische Anordnungen und Hinweise oder Agenden. Die Anweisungen bedienen sich eines knappen Sprachstiles, oftmals wird auf vollständige Sätze verzichtet, so dass der Eindruck entsteht, nur das Notwendigste sei verzeichnet. Ferner fehlen in den meisten Fällen Angaben zu Gestik und Mimik oder zum Gebrauch von Gegenständen wie etwa der Kleidung. Da die Agenda nicht alle für die korrekte Durchführung eines Rituals erforderlichen Informationen bietet, sollten derartige Hinweise nicht *per se* als Ritual angesprochen werden. Die liturgischen Anweisungen bilden im alten Mesopotamien eine eigene Fachliteratur und verwenden die Fachsprache der auf Magie oder lateureitischen Kult Spezialisierten; sie sind vornehmlich in akkadischer Sprache verfasst<sup>6</sup>. Reine “explizite Rituale” in sumerischer Sprache sind nicht auf uns gekommen. Doch können wir, wie gleichfalls in akkadischer Literatur, auf kurze Hinweise zur Rezitation etwa im Anschluss an ein Gebet oder eine Beschwörung<sup>7</sup>, die sich der Fachsprache liturgischer Anweisungen bedienen, zurückgreifen. Ein ganzer Ritualablauf lässt sich jedoch kaum rekonstruieren. Auf der anderen Seite finden wir die narrative Wiedergabe kultischer Ereignisse wie Rituale, die in lyrisch gehaltene Texte wie eben Hymnen eingebettet sind und sich auch dieser lyrischen Sprache bedienen<sup>8</sup>. Diese “impliziten Rituale” sind, wie B. Groneberg

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<sup>5</sup> Vgl. die Ausführungen von Rappaport 1999:32–50, ins. 37–46; s. ferner Tambiah 1985:123–166.

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. für einen Überblick Röllig 1987–1990:62–64 und Böck 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Erinnert sei die “ka.inim.ma-Rubriken”, denen eine Angabe zur Durchführung eines Rituals folgt. Vgl. etwa die Angabe zur Rezitation der Beschwörung “Dattelpalme, leuchtend und rein” mit der Rubrik “Um den Spross einer Dattelpalme einer kranken Person umzubinden”, s. für den Text Geller 1980:29–30.

<sup>8</sup> Ein recht anschauliches Beispiel liegt mit den Hymnen des Gudea von Lagaš vor, deren Aufbau als einem Ritual zum Tempelbau Averbeck 1997 herausgearbeitet hat.



definiert, "Texte, die Ritualabläufe schildern, aber deren Kommunikationsziel nicht die Mitteilung des Rituals an sich ist"<sup>9</sup>.

### 3. Die Göttin Inanna / Ištar

Die im Sumerischen genannte Inanna bzw. im Akkadischen mit Ištar bezeichnete Gottheit, die mit der Venus als Morgen- und Abendstern identifiziert wird, gehört aufgrund ihres eher widersprüchlichen Charakters als Göttin der Liebe und des Krieges, die männliche und weibliche Züge in sich vereint, zu einer der komplexesten Gestalten des altmesopotamischen Pantheons<sup>10</sup>. Die Verehrung Inannas, etymologisch zurückzuführen auf sum. \*nin.an.ak "Herrin des Himmels", lässt sich bereits im 4. Jt. v. Chr. nachweisen. Neben ihrer Heimatstadt Uruk besaß sie Heiligtümer in mehreren Städten, von denen als weitere wichtige Kultsitze die Städte Akkad und Kiš in Nordbabylonien genannt seien, die eine der Inanna-Gestalten, die Ištar-Annunītum, Patronin der altakkadischen Herrscher, beherbergten<sup>11</sup>. Die Züge der Göttin treten in den zahlreichen an sie gerichteten Hymnen, Gebeten und Klagen zum Vorschein und werden ergänzt durch etliche mythologische Erzählungen. Einige dieser Kompositionen handeln von dem Paar Inanna und Dumuzi, wobei die Göttin als Geliebte und Gemahlin des menschlichen Dumuzi auftritt<sup>12</sup>. Ferner sind beide Objekt einer ganzen Reihe sumerischsprachiger Liebeslieder<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Groneberg 1996:291.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. die von Wilcke 1976–1980 gebotene Übersicht; s. ferner Jacobsen 1976:135–143, Vanstiphout 1984, Bottéro 1987, Harris 1991, Groneberg 1997 und Selz 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Für die Bedeutung der Gestalt Inanna / Ištar in der Religionspolitik der Herrscher des 3. Jt.'s v. Chr. und beginnenden 2. Jt.'s sowie für den historisch-politischen Stellenwert der mythologischer Erzählungen über und Hymnen an die Göttin s. die wichtigen Beiträge von Wilcke 1974 und Wilcke 1993. Vgl. ferner mit weiterer Literatur Selz 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Dazu gehören die mythologischen Erzählungen "Inannas Gang in die Unterwelt", "Inanna und Bilulu" und "Dumuzis Traum" sowie eine ganze Reihe von Klagen über den vorzeitigen Tod Dumuzis; s. zu diesen Texten Jacobsen 1987:1–84.

<sup>13</sup> S. für die Bearbeitung dieser Texte Sefati 1998.

Inanna hat, wie es C. Wilcke formuliert, “nahezu alle möglichen Epitheta auf sich gezogen, fast kein Bereich des menschlichen Lebens fällt nicht in ihre Zuständigkeit”<sup>14</sup>. Sie gilt als Herrscherin, Inbegriff alles Weiblichen, Herrin der Flur und Tiere, Göttin der Menschen, Gottheit des Königtums, als Licht- und astrale Erscheinung, als Kriegsgöttin und Eris<sup>15</sup>. Darüberhinaus ist sie als Morgenstern männlich und wird gelegentlich auch einen Bart tragend dargestellt<sup>16</sup>. Zu ihrem Kultpersonal zählen u.a. Transvestiten, Buhlkneben und Ekstatiker (sum. *saĝ.ur.saĝ* und *kur.gar.ra*, akk. *assinnu* und *kurgarrû*), was als Hinweis auf ihre Androgynität gedeutet wurde<sup>17</sup>. Auf der anderen Seite werden der Göttin sog. *kezertu*-, *šamḫatu*- und *ḫarimtu*-Damen zugeordnet, die wohl überwiegend als Prostituierte tätig waren<sup>18</sup>. Die Dichotomie ihrer Kulddiener und -dienerinnen zeigt eindeutig die Ambiguität der Geschlechterrolle der Göttin. Als Patronin der Prostituierten stellt sie die Rolle des sexuell passiven Partners dar; umgekehrt zeigt das Phänomen des Transsexualismus und Transvestismus, wobei die Priester Inannas ihre männliche, sexuell aktive Geschlechterrolle aufgeben, dass die Göttin auch die Rolle des sexuell aktiven Partners annehmen kann. In diesem Sinne ist die Göttin nicht zweigeschlechtlich oder androgyn, sondern übernimmt sowohl die weibliche als auch die männliche Geschlechterrolle<sup>19</sup>.

Vor diesem Hintergrund ist es verständlich, dass Inanna / Ištar im Gegensatz zu anderen Göttinnen ohne einen ihr zugeeigneten Gemahl

<sup>14</sup> Wilcke 1976–1980:81.

<sup>15</sup> Wilcke 1976–1980:81 verweist bei dieser Aufzählung auf die von Tallqvist 1938:333–338 erstellte Liste der Epitheta der Göttin.

<sup>16</sup> Vgl. Groneberg 1986.

<sup>17</sup> S. zum Personal der Göttin Sjöberg 1976:223 und Maul 1992. Harris 1991:265 spricht von Inanna als einer “liminal figure”. Groneberg 1997:153–154 schlägt vor, das Kultpersonal mit Transvestiten und Ekstatikern als Hinweis darauf zu verstehen, dass die Göttin schamanistische Elemente in sich aufgenommen habe.

<sup>18</sup> S. zum Thema der Prostitution Goodnick Westenholz 1989 mit weiterführender Literatur.

<sup>19</sup> Fundierte Arbeiten zum Phänomen von Transsexualismus und Transvestismus im alten Orient fehlen bislang. Für zeitgenössische Studien s. Wikan 1977.

erscheint<sup>20</sup>. Erst im Zuge der Vereinheitlichung der Götterpanthea werden ihr von frühaltbabylonischer Zeit an (ca. 19 Jhdt. v. Chr.) Gatte, Familienmitglieder und Personal zugeordnet. Ihr Hauptpartner wird der menschliche Dumuzi, der auf kultisch-ritueller Ebene durch den Herrscher repräsentiert wird.

#### 4. Der Hymnus “Iddin-Dagān A”

Das Preislied an Inanna in ihrer Erscheinung als Venusstern Ninsi’anna – unter diesem Namen wird die astrale Gestalt der Inanna<sup>21</sup> in der Stadt Isin verehrt – ist eines von rund zehn Preisliedern in sumerischer Sprache, die an die Gottheit gerichtet sind<sup>22</sup>; nicht mitgezählt werden all diejenigen Lieder, die von dem göttlichen Paar Inanna und Dumuzi handeln<sup>23</sup>. Nach sumerischer Terminologie, deren Bedeutung sich uns wie der überwiegende Teil emischer Bezeichnungen für die hymnische Literatur entzieht, handelt es sich um ein “šir nam.ur.saĝ.ĝá d<sup>d</sup>nin.si.an.na.kam”, ein “Heldenlied auf die Göttin Ninsi’anna”<sup>24</sup>. Neben “Iddin-Dagān A” zur Bezeichnung des Hymnus findet sich der deskriptive Titel “Ein Lied zum Ritus der Heiligen Hochzeit der Göttin Inanna mit König Iddin-Dagān von Isin”, unter welchem der Erstbearbeiter W.H.Ph. Römer das Preislied veröf-

<sup>20</sup> In den ältesten Götterlisten von Fara (ca. Mitte 3. Jt. v. Chr.) wird ihr kein Gatte zugeordnet; s. Wilcke 1976–1980:75–76.

<sup>21</sup> Vgl. für eine Aufstellung und Diskussion der Venus-Gestalten Heimpel 1982.

<sup>22</sup> Einen schnellen Überblick bietet [www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section4](http://www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section4).

<sup>23</sup> Für die Liebeslieder s. die Textedition von Sefati 1998.

<sup>24</sup> Die Doxologie ist in zwei Textvertretern des Hymnus noch erhalten; s. Römer 1965:135 Z. 228. Bei der Klassifizierung sumerischer und akkadischer Literaturwerke tun wir uns schwer, nicht nur weil die traditionellen Gattungsbegriffe, welche üblicherweise der griechischen Sprache und damit der griechischen Kulturwelt entnommen sind, unpassend erscheinen, sondern auch weil die nativen Bezeichnungen sich meist einer befriedigenden Deutung entziehen; s. grundsätzlich zur Deutung von Rubriken und Unterschriften hymnischer Werke Wilcke 1976, vgl. ferner zusammenfassend Wilcke 1986 und Edzard 1994. Für eine recht feinteilige Klassifizierung von Götterliedern und Königshymnen s. Römer 1965:5–55.

fentlichte<sup>25</sup>. Der Text wurde mehrmals übersetzt und textkritisch bearbeitet; verwiesen sei auf die Arbeiten von D.D. Reisman<sup>26</sup>, W.H.Ph. Römer<sup>27</sup> und Th. Jacobsen<sup>28</sup>. Die Komposition ist durch 14 Texte und Textfragmente vertreten, die allesamt aus der Stadt Nippur stammen<sup>29</sup>. Es werden Vorbereitung und Durchführung eines Festes innerhalb des Inannakultes beschrieben, das in einer “Heiligen Hochzeit” zwischen der Gottheit und dem Herrscher Iddin-Dagān und in einem Bankett für die Göttin seinen Abschluss findet. Die Textvertreter des Hymnus werden in die Regierungszeit Iddin-Dagāns datiert.

Das Preislied ist in zehn Abschnitte geteilt, die jeweils ein sog. ki.ru.gú-Vermerk tragen. Nach *communis opinio* wird dieser Ausdruck als Bezeichnung einer Handlung “niederknien”, “sich verbeugen” verstanden<sup>30</sup>. Es wurde vorgeschlagen, dass Kompositionen mit derartigen Vermerkern im Rahmen einer Prozession vorgetragen wurden, wobei das “Kirugu” den Zeitpunkt einer Verbeugung vor der jeweiligen Gottheit oder ein Gebet an diese designiert<sup>31</sup>. Im folgenden sei Form und Aufbau des Hymnus wiedergegeben.

<sup>25</sup> Römer 1965:128–208.

<sup>26</sup> Reisman 1970:147–211; Reisman 1973.

<sup>27</sup> Römer 1989.

<sup>28</sup> Jacobsen 1987:112–124, Jacobsen 1997.

<sup>29</sup> S. Römer 1989:659–660; s. ferner [www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section2/b2531.htm](http://www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section2/b2531.htm).

<sup>30</sup> S. Wilcke 1976:260, Ludwig 1990:30–32.

<sup>31</sup> S. Hartmann 1960:234–235; für ru.gú (mit der akk. Entsprechung *maḥāru*) im Sinne von “einer Gottheit zum Gebet gegenüberreten” s. CAD M/I s.v. *maḥāru* 2(b), wörtlich übersetzt hieße der Ausdruck, “Ort, an welchem man ein Gebet an die Gottheit richtet”.

Der Hymnus bietet zwei weitere *termini technici* zur Art und Weise des Vortrages; sum. ḡiṣ.gi₄.ḡál, wörtlich etwa “das Holz zurückkehren lassen”, übertragen vielleicht “ohne instrumentelle Begleitung” in den Zeilen 19, 130, 227 (s. Wilcke 1976:260; Ludwig 1990:30), und sum. šà.ba.tuku, wörtlich “(das Lied) ist in der Mitte (des Instrumentes) gespielt” in Z. 132 (s. Wilcke 1976:260; Ludwig 1990:30).

1. Abschnitt, Z. 1–19:

Inanna, die in ihrer Gestalt als Venus am Himmel erscheint, wird begrüßt und als leuchtender Stern gepriesen; d.h. das Fest setzt am frühen Abend, nach Sonnenuntergang, ein. “Erste Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

2. Abschnitt, Z. 20–34:

Die Reihe der Cognomina wird fortgesetzt: genannt werden ihre Legitimation und ihre Aufgaben; so erhält sie vom Gott Enki u.a. das Königtum und entscheidet mit dem Gott Enlil zusammen das Schicksal der Bewohner des Landes. In diesem Augenblick treten die Festteilnehmer vor die Göttin hin. “Zweite Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

3. Abschnitt, Z. 35–44:

Es gesellen sich Musikanten dazu. Auch sie treten vor die Göttin und grüßen sie. “Dritte Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

4. Abschnitt, Z. 45–59:

Ein Teil des Kultpersonals von Inanna erscheint. Dazu gehören zunächst die sog. saĝ.ur.saĝ- Priester, männliche Prostituierte, die sich mit bunten Bändern geschmückt haben. Es folgen zwei Priesterinnen, sie werden als die weisesten unter den Frauen bezeichnet. Sie tragen eine Harfe und sind mit Kriegsgerät bewaffnet, auch sie treten vor die Göttin. “Vierte Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

5. Abschnitt, Z. 60–67:

Zwei Parteien führen Wettkämpfe vor der Göttin auf. Um welche Personen es sich dabei handelt, wird in unserem Hymnus nicht explizit geschildert, doch zeigen Parallelen aus anderen Texten zum Kultfest der Inanna, dass es sich um junge Frauen und Männer handelt (s. dazu w.u.). Die Frauen sind mit Männerkleidung, sie wird als “Rechts-Gewänder” bezeichnet, angetan, die Männer tragen Frauenkleidung oder “Links-Gewänder”. “Fünfte Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

6. Abschnitt, Z. 68–86:

Weitere Priester und Priesterinnen des Inanna-Kultes treten auf. Unter ihnen befinden sich die sog. kurgara-Priester, die Schwert und Stilet tragen; auch sie kämpfen miteinander, wobei offenbar Blut vergossen wird. “Sechste Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

## 7. Abschnitt, Z. 87–109:

Es wird berichtet, dass sich die Männer und Frauen säubern und reinigen, d.h. die Wettkämpfe sind offenbar vorüber. Dann bereitet das Kultpersonal Inannas ein üppiges Mahl vor, so dass sich die Göttin erquicken kann – die spielerischen Wettkämpfe anlässlich des Festes hatten zu ihrer Unterhaltung gedient. “Siebte Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

## 8. Abschnitt, Z. 110–125:

Nachdem sich die Göttin an Speis und Trank gelabt hat, treten einige der Festteilnehmer vor sie, die der Göttin ihre Rechtsanliegen vorbringen. Inanna hält Gericht über sie: erkennt den Bösen, überantwortet und vernichtet ihn, den Gerechten aber schaut sie getreulich an und fällt ein günstiges Urteil über ihn. “Achte Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

## 9. Abschnitt, Z. 126–166:

Offensichtlich befinden wir uns zu diesem Zeitpunkt an einem Ort außerhalb der Stadt. Denn nun werden der Göttin an einem reinen Ort der Steppe Opfer unterschiedlicher Art dargebracht. Räucherwerk wird entzündet, als wäre es ein duftender Zedernwald, Schafe werden geschlachtet, man bringt ihr Butter, Datteln, Käse und alle möglichen Obstsorten dar, verschiedene Sorten Bier werden libiert und Süßgebäck herbeigebracht; im Morgengrauen zur dritten Nachtwache folgen Schüttopfer, bei Sonnenaufgang werden ihr Honig und Wein gespendet. Dann treten die Götter und Menschen vor sie. “Neunte Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

## 10. Abschnitt, Z. 167–221:

Der Schauplatz hat sich von der Steppe zum Hause der Göttin, dem Egalmaḫ, verlagert. Der Tempel gilt als “Weisung für das Land Sumer”, als “Zwingstock der Fremdländer” und als “Haus Ordalfluss”, so seine Beinamen, die deutlich auf die Vorstellung der Göttin als Richterin über die Menschen anspielen. Die Sumerer errichten ihr dort einen Hochsitz. Dann wird der Göttin das Bettlager zurecht gemacht, damit sie das Schicksal entscheide und ihre göttlichen Aufgaben durchführe. Der Herrscher tritt auf sie zu und legt sich nieder. Dann lässt er der Göttin erneut Opfer darbringen, woraufhin sie ihn umarmt. Später treten Festteilnehmer vor die Göttin und Musikanten spielen abermals auf. Der Herrscher bereitet der Göttin ein Mahl, an welchem er selbst freudig teilnimmt. “Zehnte Verbeugung / Gebet an die Göttin”.

Abschluss, Z. 222–228:

Der Hymnus endet mit einem Lied an die Göttin, das als “Gegenstück zum Gesang, Antiphone” bezeichnet wird.

##### 5. *Interpretation des Hymnus “Iddin-Dagān A”*

Im Zentrum des Hymnus steht die Beschreibung eines Festes, dessen Interpretation und Bedeutung für den Inanna-Kult bislang nicht angestrebt worden ist. Bei Untersuchungen standen vornehmlich die Beschreibung der sog. “Heiligen Hochzeit” im Vordergrund, für deren (Re-)Konstruktion unser Hymnus den bei weitem wichtigsten Text darstellt (s. zur “Heiligen Hochzeit” w.u. 6. *Ein Ausblick*). Die Festbeschreibungen selbst wurden nur zur Illustrierung der Epitheta der Göttin Inanna / Ištar herangezogen, die von Travestie und dem Rollentausch der Geschlechter handeln. In diesem Zusammenhang wurde betont, dass durch die Travestie auf die Zweigeschlechtlichkeit der Göttin hingewiesen wird<sup>32</sup> – ein Aspekt, der vor allem bei der akkadischen Ištar zum Vorschein komme – ferner, dass die Göttin selbst schamanistische Züge trage. Diese Interpretation finde ihre Unterstützung durch die sumerische mythologische Erzählung “Inannas Gang in die Unterwelt”, in welcher die Gottheit in das Reich der Toten hinabsteigt und wiederzurückkehrt, welches die Reisen der Schamanen zwischen den Welten reflektiere<sup>33</sup>. Es kann hier sicherlich nicht der Rahmen sein, auf diesen religionshistorisch sehr wichtigen Aspekt einzugehen<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> So Harris 1991:261–278. S. aber zur Bedeutung der unterschiedlichen Geschlechterrollen Inannas / Ištars die Ausführungen w.o. (3. *Die Göttin Inanna / Ištar*).

<sup>33</sup> S. Groneberg 1997:136–137 mit Hinweis auf Burkert 1982. Burkert 1982:68 erkennt einigen Vertretern des Kultpersonals der Inanna schamanistische Züge an, doch betont er, dass diese in den Texten, die für uns greifbar sind, nicht mehr zu fassen sind – die Priester sind lediglich Spaßmacher.

<sup>34</sup> Der Hinweis auf die mythologische Erzählung des kurzfristigen Aufenthaltes Inannas in der Unterwelt scheint mir nicht zwingend auf eine mit Schamanenreisen vergleichbare Reise hinzudeuten. Ohne Zweifel ist Inanna / Ištar mit der Unterwelt dadurch verbunden, dass ihr jugendlicher Gemahl Dumuzi jeweils ein halbes Jahr in der Totenwelt weilen muss. Aus diesem Mythologem heraus ergibt es sich, dass

Vielmehr soll der Versuch unternommen werden, den Geschlechter- und Rollentausch und die Wettkämpfe als spielerisches Element des Kultfestes zu deuten. Die Vorbereitungen zu dem Wettkampf setzen ein mit der Vorstellung der Priester und Priesterinnen, die zum Inanna-Kult gehören (in dem Hymnus entspricht dies dem Abschnitt 4 bis 6)<sup>35</sup>.

Zunächst erscheinen die Vertreter des Inanna-Kultes vor der Göttin:

(45) Die Saĝursaĝ-Priester kämten sich ihr Haar. (47) Mit bunten Bändern schmückten sie sich für sie den Haarschopf im Nacken. (51) Der *luzi*-Priester, die Herrin, die ... hat<sup>36</sup>, und die großen weisen Frauen (52) treten vor die heilige Inanna.

Bei sich tragen sie Instrumente und Waffen:

(53) Die beruhigende Harfe stellten sie an die Seite. (55) Gewappnet mit dem Waffengerüst, dem "Arm der Schlacht", (57) der Speer, der "Arm der Schlacht", lag in ihrer Hand bereit.

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in Kompositionen wie etwa "Urnammas Tod" die Göttin durch ihr Klagen versucht, die Hauptgötter des sumerischen Pantheons umzustimmen und den verstorbenen Geliebten am ewigen Leben teilhaben zu lassen (s. für die Komposition Flückiger-Hawker 1999:93–182; zur Interpretation des Hymnus s. Wilcke 1970 und Wilcke 1988:245–250). Ihre enge Verbundenheit zu den Toten und dem Totenkult geht aus dem "Hymnus an Ninegala", einer Erscheinungsform der Inanna in der Stadt Nippur, hervor, in welcher die zum offiziellen Totenkult gehörenden Priester der Göttin ihre Aufwartung machen. Dort heißt es: "(70) Die Rinnen der Unterwelt öffnet man für dich. (71) Wasser der Namensanrufung schüttet man für dich hinein. (72) Der En-Priester, der Lumaĥ-Priester und die Erešdingir-Priesterin, (73) die *luzi*- (und) *amalu*-Priester, die Toten, (74) essen dir Speise, die (die Totengeister) vertreibt, (75) trinken dir Wasser, das (die Totengeister) vertreibt" (in der Übersetzung von Behrens 1998:33; s. auch den Kommentar Behrens 1998:107–111). Ferner sei an die sumerische mythologische Erzählung "Inanna und Šukaletuda" erinnert, in welcher sie nach einem Staubsturm als "alleine dahinziehender Totengeist" erscheint (s. Volk 1995:103, 107, 113 mit den Zeilen 103, 151 und 273).

<sup>35</sup> S. zu Studien zu Priesterklassen etwa die Arbeiten von Renger 1967 und Renger 1969 sowie Henshaw 1994.

<sup>36</sup> Sum. *lú-zi*, "der rechte Mann". Die Bezeichnung wurde als Referenz zum König verstanden, wie auch die nachfolgende Terminus auf die Königin bezogen wurde; vgl. Römer 1989:663 mit Anm. 51 oder Groneberg 1997:140 mit Anm. 142. Es handelt sich wohl jedoch um eine Priester-Klasse, s. Behrens 1998:109.



Dann stellen sich die Parteien auf und kämpfen:

(60) Zur rechten Seite waren sie mit einem Männergewand angetan, (63) zur linken Seite trugen sie Gewänder, heruntergezogen wie die Gewänder der Frauen. (64) Mit Springschnüren bunter Bänder führten sie vor ihr Wettkämpfe durch. (68) Die jungen Männer mit Reifen versehen sangen ihr ein Lied. (70) Die Jungfrauen (und) die Šugia-Priesterinnen, die einen Zopf tragen, (72) schlugen Schwert und Stilett vor sich zusammen.

Was genau sich hinter diesem “Rechts-Links-Komplex” verbirgt, geht aus unserem Text nicht klar hervor. Zum einen kann ein Bezug auf die Spielfelder des Wettkampfplatzes gegeben sein, zum anderen ist es möglich, dass die Teilnehmer auf der rechten Körperseite ein Männergewand tragen und die linke Körperseite mit einem Frauengewand bedecken. Sehr viel klarer lässt sich die Frage nach der Rechts- Links-Bekleidung in einem der Epitheta der Göttin fassen. Das entsprechende Cognomen ist in einer ganzen Reihe weiterer literarischer Kompositionen sowohl in sumerischer als auch akkadischer Sprache attestiert, wie B. Groneberg gezeigt hat<sup>37</sup>. Nach dem Inanna-Hymnus des Herrschers Išme-Dagān (“Išme-Dagān K”) von Isin (1953–1935 v. Chr.), dem Nachfolger Iddin-Dagāns heißt es:

Um einen Mann in eine Frau und eine Frau in einen Mann zu kehren, hast du folgendes bewirkt: Die jungen Frauen kleiden sich nach Männerart mit “Rechts”-Gewändern, die jungen Männer nach Frauenart mit “Links”-Gewändern<sup>38</sup>.

Ähnlich auch in der mythologischen Erzählung von “Enki und die Weltordnung”, in welcher Inanna von dem Weisheitsgott Enki einen eigenen göttlichen Zuständigkeitsbereich fordert, worunter u.a. die Macht des Kleidertausches fällt, was Enki ihr dann mit den folgenden Worten zuspricht:

Du vermagst es, mit einem Gewand die Seite der heroischen Kämpfer zu verdecken! Du vermagst es, die rechte Seite und die linke Seite miteinander zu vertauschen! Du vermagst es, sie mit der Kleidung der Frauenseite einzukleiden!

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<sup>37</sup> Groneberg 1997:141–142.

<sup>38</sup> S. Römer 1965:130, 138 Z. 60–63.

Du vermagst es, die Frauensprache in ihren Mund zu legen! Du vermagst es, ihnen Spindel und Kamm in die Hand zu legen!<sup>39</sup>

Einen inhaltlich vergleichbaren Passus bietet die in ihrer zweisprachigen Version in das 1. Jt. v. Chr. datierte Klage *úru ama ir.ra.bi*, vielleicht “Stadt, die geplündert wurde”<sup>40</sup>, in welchem es von der akkadischen Ištar heißt,

Die rechte Seite kehre ich in die linke, den Mann verkehre ich in eine Frau, die Frau verkehre ich in einen Mann. Ich bin es, die den Mann als Frau schmückt. Ich bin es, die die Frau als Mann schmückt<sup>41</sup>.

Auf der Grundlage dieser Texte können wir, was den Ablauf des Kultfestes in dem Hymnus “*Iddin-Dagān K*” betrifft, festhalten, dass Männer (nur Priester der Inanna?) und Frauen (nur Priesterinnen der Göttin?) sowohl ihre Kleider als auch ihre Rollen vertauschen und in ihren neuen Rollen gegeneinander kämpfen. Dass es sich nicht nur um die Priester und Priesterinnen der Göttin handeln muss, die diesen Rollentausch vornehmen, sondern vermutlich auch um (ausgewählte) Festteilnehmer, scheint aus einem akkadischsprachigen Gebet aus dem Beginn des 2. Jt.s v. Chr. hervorzugehen (“*Ištar-Louvre*”): “Die Frau ist ausgerüstet mit einem Köcher wie ein Mann, einen Bogen hält sie, / der Mann hingegen trägt Haarspange, Muschel, ... und eine kleine Harfe. / Die Frauen tragen Wurfhölzer, Schleudern und Keulensteine”<sup>42</sup>. Ein weiterer Aspekt eines fortführenden Rollentausches kommt in dem Inanna-Hymnus *Išme-Dagān* (“*Išme-Dagān K*”) zum Zuge. Im Anschluss an die bereits zitierte Stelle ist zu lesen:

<sup>39</sup> Zitiert sind Z. 430–434; für die Transliteration und Übersetzung s. die beiden Internetseiten des Projektes Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: [www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section1/c113hmt](http://www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section1/c113hmt) bzw. [www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr113hmt](http://www-etcs1.orient.ox.ac.uk/section1/tr113hmt).

<sup>40</sup> Zur Textedition s. Volk 1989; zur exakten Deutung des Titels der Klage s. die Diskussion von Volk 1989:11–13.

<sup>41</sup> Zu dieser Stelle s. bereits Sjöberg 1976:225; s. ferner Volk 1989:143–144, 150 (Z. 65–70).

<sup>42</sup> S. Groneberg 1997:26, 27 und 46 (Kommentar).

“Die Frauen sprechen wie kleine Kinder, kleine Kinder sprechen wie Frauen”<sup>43</sup>.

Durch den Rollen- und Generationstausch werden die sozialen Kategorien aufgehoben und in einem Wettkampf spielerisch verkehrt – die Frauen, mit Waffen ausgerüstet, kämpfen gegen Lieder singende Männer. Die soziale Identität wird derartig verdreht, dass sie das Gegenteil der alltäglichen sozialen Stellung darstellt. Wir können daher von einem Inversionsritual sprechen, dessen Umkehrung durch Mimikri (Kleidertausch), Imitation (Männer kämmen sich, Frauen tragen Schwerter) oder Verspottung (Frauen brabbeln wie Kleinkinder, die sich umgekehrt gewählter Ausdrucksweise bedienen) charakterisiert ist.

Fassen wir zusammen: Das Götterlied an Inanna in ihrer astralen Gestalt der Ninsi’anna berichtet von einem Fest zu Ehren der Gottheit. Im Mittelpunkt des Festes steht ein Inversionsritual, währenddessen die Geschlechter- und Generationsrollen verkehrt werden. Diesem Aspekt des Festes scheint eine derartige Bedeutung zugekommen zu sein, dass die Macht, diesen Rollentausch zu bewirken, zu einem der Epitheta der Göttin Inanna / Ištar wurde. Derartige Rituale hier in Form eines spielerischen Wettkampfes während des Festes, deren Zweck in der Auflösung sozialer Grenzen besteht, bilden, wie allgemein angenommen wird, die Grundlage für eine Rekonstituierung der Regeln und Grenzen. Ihr Zweck besteht darin, die Richtigkeit der moralischen wie sozialen Ordnung zu bekräftigen, welchem eine Vertiefung des Glaubens an das jeweilige religiöse System zugesprochen wird<sup>44</sup>. Unser Kultfest zu Ehren der Göttin Inanna findet, wie es im Text heißt, “am Höhepunkt des Jahres”<sup>45</sup> statt, welches die Bedeutung der Feierlichkeiten unterstreicht.

Ein weiterer im Hymnus angesprochener wichtiger Aspekt ist die Beschreibung der Göttin als derjenigen, der exekutive Macht zukommt.

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<sup>43</sup> S. Römer 2001:60, 62 (Z. 24–25).

<sup>44</sup> Vgl. zur Bedeutung derartiger Inversionsrituale Bell 1997:126–128.

<sup>45</sup> Der sum. Terminus *zag.mu* wird oftmals mit “Neujahr” wiedergegeben, was, wie Sallaberger 1993:142–143 mit Anm. 669 gezeigt hat, revidiert werden muss.

Nachdem Inanna sich ausgeruht und süß geschlafen hatte, wie es im Hymnus heißt (Z. 113–114), treten die ‘Schwarzköpfigen’ – eine poetische Bezeichnung für die Einwohner Sumers<sup>46</sup> – vor sie mit ihren Rechtsangelegenheiten. Die Göttin weiß, die Gerechten von den Bösen zu unterscheiden, und bestimmt dementsprechend den Bösen ein böses Geschick und vernichtet ihn, während sie den Gerechten wohlmeinend anblickt und ihm ein gutes Los zuteilt (Z. 117–119). Damit Inanna auch zukünftig in der Lage ist, sich, wie es heißt “um das Leben aller Länder zu kümmern” (Z. 171), wird ihr das Hochzeitsgemach hergerichtet.

Zweifelsohne wird es kaum gelingen, den literarischen Topos “Leben” mit Sicherheit füllen zu können, doch dürfen wir wohl davon ausgehen, dass in einer traditionell landwirtschaftlich ausgerichteten Gesellschaft wie der des alten Mesopotamiens Fruchtbarkeit und Gedeihen einen Teil bildete. Nicht weniger wichtig von Bedeutung sind Gerechtigkeit und entsprechend gerechte Machtausführung, die der Göttin nach dem Hymnus zukommen. Mit der sich wohl nur auf mythologischer Ebene abspielenden Vereinigung oder sog. “Heilige Hochzeit” von Herrscher und Gottheit übernimmt der König die Verantwortung dafür, die Göttin mit regelmäßigen Opfern zu versorgen und ihr Tempel zu bauen, damit diese ihren Aufgaben nachkommen kann<sup>47</sup> – vergleichbar, wenn man so will, mit der Verantwortung für den Lebensunterhalt der Ehefrau auf menschlicher Ebene<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Zu einer möglichen Assoziation zwischen der Bezeichnung “schwarzköpfig” und dem Raben, der in der sumerischen Mythologie eine gewisse Rolle spielt, s. die Überlegungen von Selz 2001:49 mit Anm. 42.

<sup>47</sup> Z. 201: “Überfluss und Pracht stellt er in überreicherlicher Fülle geradewegs vor sie hin”, s. Römer 1989:671. Vgl. ferner die Komposition “Išme-Dagān K” Z. 35–39 (in Auszügen), s. Römer 2001:63. “Die Götter Enlil und Ninlil haben ihr (= Inanna) (...) Išme-Dagān (...) zum Gemahl gegeben, damit dieser veranlasse, dass die Häuser der Götter gebaut (...), ihre Hochterassen mit Tempel leuchtend gemacht, ihre Hochsitze kultisch gereinigt werden, in ihren Zellen honigsüße alkoholische Getränke, Bier und *kurun*-Bier-Rationen für alle Tage festgesetzt werden”.

<sup>48</sup> Zu den Hochzeitsgebräuchen und Umständen s. Greengus 1966 und Greengus 1990.

Eine ähnliche Verkettung von Inversionsritual, sich anschließender exekutiver Machtausübung durch Inanna und folgend die Verpflichtung des Herrschers durch Vermählung, die Versorgung der Göttin zu garantieren, bietet ein weiteres Preislied an Inanna. Es handelt sich um den bereits mehrfach zitierten Hymnus Išme-Dagāns an Inanna; nach dem Rollentausch heisst es: “Damit das Recht der zahlreichen Menschen in Ordnung gebracht werde, der Gerechte für rein erklärt, das Recht in gebührender Weise entschieden werde, (...) haben die Götter Enlil und Ninlil ihr Išme-Dagān (...) als Gemahl gegeben”<sup>49</sup>.

Entscheidungsgewalt und Ausübung der exekutiven Macht durch Inanna spiegelt sich auch in anderen literarischen Kompositionen wieder, wobei die Göttin als Ausdruck ihrer Gleichheits- oder auch Vorrangsstellung oftmals zusammen mit den großen Göttern An, Enlil und Enki genannt wird<sup>50</sup>. Der Ort, in welchem Inanna der Durchführung von Recht nachkommt und mit dem Herrscher zusammentrifft<sup>51</sup>, trägt den bezeichnenden Namen “Haus, das dem Lande Sumer Weisungen ergehen lässt” und “Haus Ordalfluss”<sup>52</sup>. Doch sollte dem

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<sup>49</sup> Für die Bearbeitung des zum Teil schwer verständlichen Textes s. Römer 2001:62–63; zitiert wurden die Zeilen 32, 35–36.

<sup>50</sup> So etwa in dem Hymnus an Ninegala, der Inanna-Erscheinung in der Stadt Nippur (Z. 79f): “Inanna, wenn du mit An und Enlil richtest, Ninegala, wenn du auf Erden mit Enki das Schicksal entschieden hast”, zitiert nach Behrens 1998:33. In seinem Kommentar zu diesen Zeilen verweist Behrens 1998:111–114 auf vier weitere Kompositionen, die Inanna in vergleichbarem Kontext beschreiben. In der Ur III-zeitlichen Dichtung (ca. 2100–2000 v. Chr.) “Urnammas Tod” klagt der tote Urnamma darüber, dass die Göttin beim Rechtsspruch über ihn nicht anwesend war; “Die Erste, die Herrin Inanna, war in der Auseinandersetzung über meinen Urteilsspruch nicht da” (Z. 196), s. für die Bearbeitung des Textes Flückiger-Hawker 1999:101–182. In der Klage úru àm.ma ir.ra.bi wird die Göttin folgendermaßen beschrieben: “Wenn ich an den Platz des Rechtsspruches getreten bin, bin ich eine Frau, eine, die die (Rechts-)Angelegenheiten genau kennt”, s. Volk 1989:203.

<sup>51</sup> Z. 170: “Der König, der Gott, weilt dort mit ihr zusammen”, s. Römer 1989:669. Für die Fragestellung der Königsvergöttlichung s. zusammenfassend Sallaberger 1999:152–154 mit weiterführender Literatur.

<sup>52</sup> Z. 167–168; s. dazu Römer 1989:669 mit Anm. 168a.

Namen selbst keine allzu großen Bedeutung zugesprochen werden, da Tempel anderer Götter ähnlich bezeichnet werden<sup>53</sup>.

Da der Hymnus "Iddin-Dagān A" den wichtigsten Textzeugen für die sog. "Heilige Hochzeit" bildet, sei dieser Komplex im Folgenden angeschnitten.

#### 6. *Ein Ausblick: Die "Heilige Hochzeit"*

Der Begriff "Heilige Hochzeit" geht auf das griechische *hieros gamos* zurück und wird in erster Linie auf den Mythos der Heirat zwischen Hera und Zeus übertragen<sup>54</sup>. Nach der allgemein als Lehrmeinung beschriebenen Theorie bezeichnet der Begriff auf kultisch-ritueller Ebene eine Hochzeitsfeier des Herrschers mit der Göttin Inanna am Neujahrstag, woraufhin die Göttin dem König Gedeihen und Fruchtbarkeit des Landes gewährt und ihm ein gutes Schicksal bestimmt. Welche Bedeutung dem Aspekt der Fruchtbarkeit zukommt, ist umstritten, da Inanna weder zu den "Fruchtbarkeitsgöttern" gehört, noch sich das Gewähren von Fruchtbarkeit auf Texte der "Heiligen Hochzeit" beschränkt, sondern vielmehr Gemeinplatz vieler Segenswünsche bildet. Eher, so wurde unlängst argumentiert, stellt der Fruchtbarkeitsaspekt eine sekundäre Entwicklung des Rituals dar, mit dessen

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<sup>53</sup> So etwa wird der Tempel der Ningal in Ur als "Haus, Ordalfluss des Landes" bezeichnet (Frayne 1990:204 Z. 14); der Tempel des Gottes Nusku in Nippur trägt das Epitheton "Ort, in welchem die großen Urteilssprüche gefällt werden, Ordalfluss" (Sjöberg u. Bergmann 1969:19 Z. 53) und vom Tempel der Göttin Baba in Uruk(g) heißt es, "in ihm sei der Ordalfluss" (Sjöberg u. Bergmann 1969:32 Z. 264).

<sup>54</sup> Durch Dehnung des Begriffes wurden in der Religionsgeschichte auch die Verbindungen zwischen Göttern und Menschen sowie die geschlechtliche Vereinigung zweier Menschen miteinander als eine sakrale Handlung mit "Heiliger Hochzeit" bezeichnet. Diese sakrale Handlung sollte durch Analogiezauber die Fruchtbarkeit der Mutter Erde fördern (s. Mannhardt 1875:480–488 insb. 485–86, Frazer 1911:97–170). Die Interpolation der Komplexe Götterhochzeit und Fruchtbarkeit als Folge geschlechtlichen Beischlafes sollte in der Folgezeit bestimmend sein für das Verständnis und die Diskussion der "Heiligen Hochzeit" in der mesopotamischen Religionsgeschichte bzw. in der assyriologischen Literatur.

Durchführung in erster Linie eine Verfestigung des Verhältnisses Gottheit-Mensch zum Ausdruck gebracht werden soll<sup>55</sup>.

Die Hochzeitsfeier wird als zentrale Feier angesehen<sup>56</sup>. Neuere Studien zeigen, dass der Terminus, der gemeinhin mit Neujahr übersetzt wird (zag.mu), sich nicht auf einen bestimmten Kalendertag bezieht, sondern auf einen Höhepunkt im Jahr, der abhängig vom Festkalender einzelner Städte und Regionen auf einen je anderen Tag fallen kann<sup>57</sup>. In der Hochzeitsfeier, so die Lehrmeinung, repräsentiere der Herrscher die Gestalt des Dumuzi, des Gatten und Geliebten der Inanna in einer Reihe von Mythen. Inanna selbst soll in diesem Ritual durch eine Priesterin, durch die königliche Gemahlin, oder durch ihre Götterstatue verkörpert worden sein<sup>58</sup>. Von welcher Natur die Göttin in dieser Kulthandlung war, ist vordergründig irrelevant; obgleich wir hier aufgrund der Textlage davon ausgehen, dass die Göttin als Statue dem Herrscher begegnete<sup>59</sup> und die z.T. erotischen Beschreibungen der

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<sup>55</sup> S. Cooper 1993:91–92 mit weiterführender Literatur. Nach Cooper ist es “the marriage relationship that is being reinforced; this is no random copulation intended to encourage fertility, but rather a sexual relationship in a carefully circumscribed context that entails a whole network of obligations between the partners and their kin” (ebd.).

<sup>56</sup> Für einen kritischen Überblick s. Renger 1972–1975. Es kann hier nicht der Platz sein, die gesamte Literatur darzustellen. Wir beschränken uns auf einige wichtige Darstellungen und Stellungnahmen, die weiterführende Literatur zum Thema bieten: Kramer 1969, van Dijk 1971:485–486, Kraus 1974:245–246, Jacobsen 1975, Römer 1982, Klein 1992, Cooper 1993, Sweet 1994, Leick 1994:130–138, Goodnick Westenholz 1995 (mir nicht zugänglich), Sefati 1998:30–49, Steinkeller 1999.

<sup>57</sup> So Sallaberger 1999:155–156.

<sup>58</sup> Zur Position, es handle sich um eine Priesterin, s. etwa Römer 1982:421 und Jacobsen 1987:87–88. Jacobsen 1987:4 mit Anm. 5 bot noch einen weiteren Ansatz: Im Hinblick auf die wichtige Rolle der Königin im Kult, sei es naheliegend davon auszugehen, dass es die Königin war, die die Göttin in einer jährlich durchgeführten “Heiligen Hochzeit” verkörpere. Dass die Göttin durch eine menschliche Vertreterin dargestellt wurde, wurde beispielsweise von Sweet 1994:102–104 bezweifelt, vgl. ferner Klein 1992:867.

<sup>59</sup> Keiner der literarischen Texte erwähnt eine Stellvertreterin der Göttin, sei es eine Priesterin oder die Königin selbst.

Vereinigung auf rein metaphorisch-spirituellem Ebene stattfanden, um die Zuhörerschaft oder Teilnehmer an den Festlichkeiten in anregender Weise zu unterhalten.

In jüngster Zeit wurde in Zweifel gezogen, ob der “Heiligen Hochzeit” tatsächlich ein zentraler Stellenwert im Kultkalender zukam, da sich in dem umfangreichen Korpus von Verwaltungsurkunden keinerlei Hinweise auf besondere Rationen und Opfer für ein derartiges Fest finden. Ferner wurde das Problem angesprochen, dass die Texte, die zu einer Rekonstruktion der “Heiligen Hochzeit” herangezogen sind, das Verhältnis von Herrscher und Göttin auf rein mythologischer Ebene schildern und keinen Hinweis auf rituelle Kulthandlungen bieten. Die Vorstellung des Herrschers als Gemahl der Göttin zeige vielmehr seine Einbindung in die Götterwelt, vergleichbar mit seiner Gottessohnschaft und Gottesbruderschaft<sup>60</sup>.

Wie kürzlich von P. Steinkeller betont wurde, sollte die “Heilige Hochzeit” in Kontext mit dem politischen und religiösen Amt des *en*, so die sumerische Bezeichnung, die gemeinhin mit “Herr” wiedergegeben wird, behandelt werden. Der Herrschaftstitel *en* von Uruk ist vornehmlich für die Dynastien von Ur und Isin bezeugt, die über einen Zeitraum von rund 300 Jahren herrschten; in absoluten Zahlen nach der sog. mittleren Chronologie von 2112 bis 1794 v. Chr. Die beiden voneinander getrennten Ämter und Funktionsträger – der König als *en* der Stadt Uruk und der Prinz bzw. Priester als *en* der Göttin Inanna – scheinen während der Herrschaft der beiden Dynastien, Ur und Isin, bei besonderen Festlichkeiten zusammengefallen zu sein, so dass der König als *en* von Uruk bei bestimmten Festtagen wie beispielsweise der “Heiligen Hochzeit” den sog. *en*-Priester der Inanna ersetzen würde. Der Herrschaftstitel *en* von Uruk würde dann, so Steinkeller, als Prärogative für die Teilnahme des Königs an der “Heiligen Hochzeit” gelten<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> So vor allem Cooper 1993:91–92, vgl. Steinkeller 1999:135–136 und ferner dazu Sallaberger 1999:155–156.

<sup>61</sup> Steinkeller 1999:130–131.



Vor diesem Hintergrund lässt es sich erklären, dass sich die literarischen Quellen als Zeugnis der “Heiligen Hochzeit” auf die Herrschaftshäuser der Städte Ur und Isin mit ihren Dynastie-Gründern Urnamma (2112–2095 v. Chr.)<sup>62</sup> und Išbi-Erra (2017–1985 v. Chr.) beschränken<sup>63</sup>. Das hier vorgestellte Preislied des Isin-Herrschers Iddin-Dagān auf Inanna in ihrer Erscheinung der Venus-Gestalt Ninsi’anna bildet in Anbetracht der Ausführlichkeit in der Darstellung einen der wichtigsten Textzeugen für die (Re-)Konstruktion der “Heiligen Hochzeit”. Sollte die Interpretation der Festlichkeiten zutreffen, so bildete die “Heilige Hochzeit” Bestandteil eines, wenn nicht des bedeutendsten, Kultfestes zu Ehren der Göttin. Aufgrund der Teilnehmer am Fest mit seinen Inversionsritualen samt ihren uns karnevalesk erscheinenden Zügen und der Inszenierung richterlicher Machtausübung Inannas zeichnet sich dieses Ereignis deutlich als Volksfest zu Ehren Inannas aus. Dieses Volksfest hat ohne eine sich daran anschließende “Heilige Hochzeit” seinen eigenständigen Charakter auch in späterer Zeit bewahrt<sup>64</sup>, was Fragen nach dem Alter des Festes einerseits und nach der Rolle der “Heiligen Hochzeit” innerhalb des Festes andererseits nachsichzieht – Fragen, welche aufgrund unserer derzeitigen Quellenlage kaum beantwortet werden können (aber doch gestellt seien), wie etwa: Diente das populäre Kultfest Inannas als Vehikel

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<sup>62</sup> Zu den Texten, die gemeinhin als Zeugnis der “Heiligen Hochzeit” herangezogen werden, gehören die Komposition “Der Tod Urnammas” (Z. 212–216; s. Flückiger-Hawker 1999:138–139) und eines der Preislieder Šulgis (2094–2047 v. Chr.), Šulgi X (Z. 11–41; s. Klein 1981:136–139). Für weitere Texte, die lediglich das Gemach Inannas und ihr Bett erwähnen, s. Sefati 1998:36–40.

<sup>63</sup> Zu den Textzeugnisse, in welchen Isin-Herrscher als Teilnehmer der “Heiligen Hochzeit” auftreten, zählt neben den Hymnen Iddin-Dagān A und Išme-Dagān K die Klage “In der Steppe im jungen Gras”, in welcher einige der Isin-Könige als verstorbene Geliebte Inannas genannt werden (Z. 287’–302’; s. die Übersetzung von Jacobsen 1987:78–79). Vgl. ferner für weitere Texte, in denen Bett und Gemach Inannas geschildert werden, Sefati 1998:36–40.

<sup>64</sup> S. dazu die Feierlichkeiten in Mari (s. bereits Groneberg 1997:146–148) oder die in der Klage mit dem Titel úru àm.ma ir.ra.bi beschriebenen Festivitäten (s. bereits Groneberg 1997:148–150).

für die “Heilige Hochzeit”, deren Zelebration als sekundäre Entwicklung durch die Herrscher von Ur und Isin mit dem Volksfest verknüpft wurde? In anderen Worten, haben die Herrscher von Ur und Isin das Fest für sich vereinnahmt als Bühne ihrer Königsideologie? Oder geht die Einführung des Kultfestes auf die Durchführung der “Heiligen Hochzeit” zurück, welches derartig populär wurde, dass es auch in den nachfolgenden Perioden noch gefeiert wurde?

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# CONCEIVING THE CANON IN DVAITA VEDĀNTA: MADHVA'S DOCTRINE OF "ALL SACRED LORE"

VALERIE STOKER

## Summary

The past decade has witnessed a growing scholarly interest in the Veda's status as a canon for precolonial, Brahminical Hinduism. In an effort to refute the notion that Hinduism is a purely Orientalist construct, several scholars have attempted to locate an indigenous set of shared religious beliefs in Brahmins' consistent reference to the Veda as the standard for religious orthodoxy.<sup>1</sup> Yet even as such arguments posit the Veda as a unifying feature for the diverse Hindu tradition,<sup>2</sup> their very emphasis on the Veda's role as a canon reveals a plurality of understandings of the Veda's nature and message. Heeding J.Z. Smith's (1982) assessment of the role of canon in religious traditions, scholars interested in the Veda's significance for Hinduism have analyzed how specific Brahmin communities innovatively reinterpret the Veda to preserve its relevance in the face of changing circumstances.<sup>3</sup> Because these circumstances are often beyond the pale of Brahminical society, scholarly emphasis on the Veda's canonicity historicizes the Brahminical tradition, highlights that tradition's links to other communities, and breaks down the Orientalist monolith.

This article contributes to this ongoing academic discussion by considering the historically significant, highly controversial, and yet insufficiently understood construction of the Vedic canon on the part of Taulāva philosopher and saint, Śrī Madhvācārya (1238–1317). Focusing on Madhva's doctrine of *sarvavidyājāta* or "the collection of all sacred lore" presented in his Ṛgvedic commentary, this article examines how Madhva challenges common conceptions of the Vedic canon's external parameters, internal structure, and core truths in ways that still invoke established exegetical norms.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Smith's *Reflections on Ritual, Resemblance and Religion* (1989) and Wilhelm Halbfass's *Tradition and Reflection* (1991) are two important examples.

<sup>2</sup> The relationship between Brahminical and other pre-colonial forms of Hinduism also requires further scholarly analysis. Yet even if invocations of the Veda's canonicity are Brahmin-centric, changes in the way Brahmins define and interpret their canon often reflect broader social and historic realities.

<sup>3</sup> For examples of this scholarship see Patton 1994, and Dalmia, Malinar and Christof 2001.

I argue that both the success and the controversy surrounding Madhva's version of the canon indicate that the category of Vedic orthodoxy was central to medieval South Indian Brahminical identity. At the same time, however, notions of normative and non-normative Vedic exegesis were being reconsidered in light of changing religious needs.

### *Introduction*

The founder of the largest ideologically and ritually distinct Brahmin sect in Karnataka, Madhva is perhaps best known for his idiosyncratic, contrarian rendition of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* statement *tat tvam asi* or "you are that." In an effort to validate his dualist understanding of the God-soul relationship by presenting it as the Vedic canon's core truth, Madhva re-parses the longer sentence in which this preeminently monist phrase appears. Carrying over the 'a' from the preceding word *ātmā*, Madhva renders the phrase *atat tvam asi* or "you are not that."<sup>4</sup> In doing so, he denies any identity between the individual human soul, or *ātman*, and the ultimate reality Brahman, whom Madhva equates with the Hindu deity Viṣṇu.

While Madhva does not always resort to the drastic measure of revising the Veda's form to make its content more amenable to his realist, pluralistic Vaiṣṇavism, his willingness to do so is symptomatic of his general hermeneutic approach. Indeed, his system of *dvaita* or "dualistic" Vedānta offers up a radically different interpretation of the late Vedic texts, the Upaniṣads, from that of his monist Vedāntin predecessors.<sup>5</sup> This new interpretation relies in large part on a new

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<sup>4</sup> For an excellent discussion of the significance of this reparsed phrase for later Dvaita, see Gerow 1987.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, Madhva is not the first (or only) Vedāntin to challenge the radical monism of Śāṅkara's Advaita Vedānta but he is the first to offer a dualist reading of the Upaniṣads that completely separates *ātman* and *Brahman*. There is an irony in the fact that Madhva himself may overstate Śāṅkara's normativity. He and his followers not only identify Śāṅkara as their primary exegetical opponent but often posit Śāṅkara's Advaita Vedānta as an intellectual juggernaut. While the historical accuracy of this presentation may be debatable, it serves as a rhetorical device to highlight the significance of Madhva's contribution, i.e., rescuing Brahmins from a fallacious understanding of their sacred canon.

understanding of the Veda's external parameters and internal structure. Of course, Madhva does not present his understanding of the canon as 'new' but as a reassertion of its original form and content, both of which have been distorted not only through bad commentaries composed by unworthy exegetes but also through a faulty transmission of the Veda itself, during which loss and interpolation have occurred.

Madhva engages all of these issues directly in his *Ṛgbhāṣya* (*RB*), a commentary on the first forty hymns of the *Ṛgveda* which was itself intended to challenge prevailing notions of the Veda's function as a means of religious knowledge. In addition to arguing for a philosophical analysis of hymns most Vedāntin exegetes dismissed as ritualistic, Madhva's *Ṛgbhāṣya* (verses 22–106) introduces the transmission of the *sarvavidyās*, literally "all sources/forms of knowledge." He also uses the singular terms *sarvavidyājāta* and *sarvavidyāpara*, literally the "collection" or "mass" of these sources and which I have translated as "the entire sacred corpus" or "all sacred lore." By presenting this corpus as an originally organic whole which is then subdivided into different branches during its transmission from the mind of Viṣṇu to the human realm, Madhva attempts to forge links between the more widely agreed upon, bounded notion of the Vedic canon<sup>6</sup> and those extra-Vedic traditions that serve more directly as the source for Madhva's ideas.

According to Madhva's presentation of "all sacred lore" in the *RB*, these extra-Vedic sources include traditions that are typically designated *smṛti* or "that which is remembered." An open-ended category whose specific meaning has been debated by scholars, *smṛti* is broadly understood to refer to those traditions that Brahmin authorities "remember" from previous teachers and that are in consonance with the Vedic revelation's significance. Yet while an intimacy between *smṛti* and the Veda is thereby presumed—a fact made evident in

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<sup>6</sup> When Madhva speaks of a bounded Veda, he refers, as was conventional in his period, to the four Vedas (or the earliest collections of verses, the *Ṛg*, the *Sāma*, the *Yajur*, and the *Atharva-Vedas*) as well as the later Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads.

several *smṛti* texts' claims to constitute an additional or "fifth" Veda — the term *smṛti* also highlights the Veda's unique and bounded status as *śruti* or "that which was heard" by ancient seers (*ṛṣis*) as a supernatural revelation.<sup>7</sup> By presenting, in his *RB*, the cosmogony of "all the *vidyās*" as including both the Veda and select *smṛti* traditions, Madhva blurs the boundaries between these two categories of religious knowledge in new ways that serve the distinctive needs of his exegetical agenda.

More dramatically perhaps, Madhva's doctrine of "all the *vidyās*" expands the category of *śruti* by including quotes from traditions that Madhva labels *śruti*, but which critics as early as the 13th century accuse Madhva of fabricating and which his own commentators are often at pains to legitimate. Madhva seems to address this criticism preemptively by claiming to be an *avatāra* of the wind-god Vāyu<sup>8</sup> who received the complete version of the sacred canon directly from Viṣṇu Himself and who is therefore able to restore those portions that have been lost. Indeed, as we shall see below, the notion of a faulty transmission process is central to Madhva's presentation of "all the *vidyās*" as an open-ended yet innately flawed canon that is redeemable only through the appearance of a certain kind of exegete, i.e., Madhva himself.

Madhva's new version of the canon's parameters contributed greatly to the controversy surrounding his Vedic exegesis. In his illuminating study of Madhva's citations from unknown *śrutis*, Roque Mesquita dates this controversy to the 13th century and claims that the Viśiṣṭādvaitin-or 'Qualified Monist' — Vedic interpreter, Vedānta Deśika,

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the "textuality" of the Vedas, see Patton 1994:10ff.

<sup>8</sup> Madhva bases this *avatāra* claim on his interpretation of *RV* I.141.1–3, the *Bṛīhatsūkta*. The hymn deals with the creation of Agni and does not mention Vāyu. The word "madhva" appears and Madhva analyses it in terms of his given name "Ānandatīrtha" to mean "madhu" or "sweet" plus "va" meaning "tīrtha." Madhva's interpretation of this hymn relies to such a heavy extent on *nirukta* (word derivation) that translating his comments is difficult. Through this method, Madhva asserts that there have been three incarnations of Vāyu, the first two being Hanumān and Bhīmasena. Madhva, the third, has a special role in the current dark age, the Kaliyuga. For a discussion of this, and an attempted translation, see Mesquita 1997 and 2000.

criticizes Madhva (albeit without naming him) for inventing false *śrutis* and interpolating his own statements into established Vedic and *smṛti* sources. In verse 65 of his *Śataduṣāni*, Vedānta Deśika states the following:

There are statements that are not found in any of the agreed upon *śruti* and *smṛti* texts. Some sinful people, in the interests of their own system of thought which conforms to their behaviour, interpolate these statements, claiming to have read them in Purāṇas that are unknown, lost, or whose beginnings and ends are not easily determined. Learned people who are steeped in the study of the available *śrutis*, etc. (*pratyakṣaśrutyādi*) can nowhere ascertain these statements.<sup>9</sup>

More explicitly, the 16th century Advaita or Monist Vedānta exegete, Appayya Dīkṣita, devoted an entire work to criticizing Madhva's Vedic exegesis. The *Madhvatantramukhamardana*, or *Crushing the Face of Madhva's Philosophy*, claims that Madhva invents fake texts, poses as an *avatāra* of Vāyu, concocts original readings of the Veda, and in the process, transgresses the very boundaries (*maryāda*) of *vaidikatva*, "what is Vedic."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps most damaging, as I will show below, Madhva's earliest commentators exhibit unease with some of his exegetical choices, particularly his reliance on unknown *śrutis*. These commentators often attempt to provide examples of *prasiddha* or "well-known" Vedic texts that say the same thing as Madhva's unknown *śrutis*.

Yet while Madhva's new definition of the canon's form mapped out in his doctrine of "all the *vidyās*" generated anxiety for opponents and adherents alike, the fact that many South Indian Brahmins from the

<sup>9</sup> Translation follows Mesquita 2000:28: yāni cānyāni vākyāni sampratipannaśrutismṛtiṣu adrśyamānāni svācānurūpamataparicaryayā keṣucid aprasiddheṣu vā naṣṭakoṣeṣu vānirūpitamūlagreṣu vā purāṇeṣu prakṣipyā paṭhanti pāpīṣṭhāḥ, tāni pratyakṣaśrutyādi-pariśīlanaśāliniṣu gariṣṭhagoṣṭhiṣu nāvakāśam labhante.

<sup>10</sup> Sanskrit from Mesquita 2000:30, *MTMM* vv. 2–3 tathāpya ānandatīrthīyam matam agrāhyam eva naḥ | yatra vaidikamaryādā bhūyasyākulatām gatā || ataḥ pañcādhikaraṇīm lakṣyīkṛtyaiva tanmate | dūṣyasthalāni sarvatra sūcyante sudhiyām mude ||

13th century on converted to Madhva's position indicates that his exegesis had a definite appeal. As several scholars have noted, this appeal was due in large part to Madhva's controversial claim to be an incarnation of the wind-god Vāyu and the charismatic immediacy this lent his reading of the Veda.<sup>11</sup> By presenting himself as a divine emissary, Madhva hoped to invigorate an exegetical tradition that he considered moribund and lacking in ability to respond to contemporary (13th century) challenges. Some of these challenges were specific to Madhva's region of South Kanara, such as the growing social and political prestige of the heterodox (*nāstika*) tradition, Jainism, as well as egalitarian "Hindu" movements such as Basavaṇṇa's monist Vīraśaivism.<sup>12</sup> Other challenges were linked to broader changes in South Indian society, particularly large-scale political instability brought on by the disintegration of well-established political institutions, warring chieftains, and military (and cultural) incursions of the Delhi Sultanate into the peninsula.<sup>13</sup>

Given these seismic shifts in 13th-century South Indian society, and their numerous local reverberations, it should not be surprising that Madhva's concern with rearticulating the Veda's relevance was part of a broader trend among Hindu elites to reemphasize traditional, yet newly construed, values.<sup>14</sup> Madhva's distinctiveness resides in his particular methods for positioning his theology within a range of

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<sup>11</sup> Mesquita 1997; Sheridan 1992; Zydenbos 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Zydenbos 2001, especially 113–22.

<sup>13</sup> The respective works of Ramesh 1970, Stein 1994a, 1994b, and Thapar 1990 highlight the 13th century as a turning point in South Indian history. While the disintegration of Chola sovereignty during Madhva's early lifetime had no direct impact on South Kanara, which continued to be ruled by the predominantly Jain Aḷupas, the Hoysaḷa kingship that subsequently emerged in other regions of the Karnatak threatened Aḷupa sovereignty without guaranteeing protection from Muslim invaders. Indeed, two years after Madhva's death, the Hoysaḷas are overthrown by the breakaway sultanate at Madurai. For a further elaboration of these issues see Ramesh 1970:137ff., Stein 1994a:14ff., and Thapar 1990:321ff.

<sup>14</sup> Noted Madhva scholar, B. N. K. Sharma, credits Madhva with *initiating* this trend (Sharma 1961:2–4), which was then elaborated on by the Vijayanagara empire.

competing alternatives. In addition to claiming to be an *avatāra* of Vāyu, Madhva absorbs many elements of local extra-Vedic traditions precisely to assert the distinctive authority of his version of the Vedic perspective. For example, Zydenbos has demonstrated that Madhva's pluralistic metaphysics and realist epistemology borrow heavily from local Jain beliefs but are expressed in the traditional Brahmin format of Vedic commentaries precisely to mask this influence.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, Madhva's eclectic reconstruction of the Vedic canon articulated in his doctrine of "all sacred lore," combines the processes of absorbing and delimiting the religious significance of competing local traditions. As I will discuss in detail below, Madhva acknowledges local Śaiva sensibilities by asserting a hierarchical ordering of reality that delineates the relative authority and soteriological significance of different deities and their affiliate textual traditions. In this way, Madhva hierarchically orders the canon in an attempt to legitimate several key components of his distinctive Vaiṣṇava theology while still appealing to a broad range of religious constituencies.

In terms of the caste identity of Madhva's audience, part of the appeal of Madhva's exegesis among Brahmins was the metaphysical justification of high-caste privilege that Madhva conveyed via his doctrine of an eternal gradation and predestination of souls. Several scholars have noted that Madhva does not consistently link this spiritual hierarchy to caste.<sup>16</sup> However, his adherence to caste-based rules restricting access to Vedic texts deemed essential to salvation effectively linked

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For a nuanced discussion of the issue of Vijayanagara's "Hindu-ness" vis-à-vis Islamic politics, see Stein 1994b:382–93.

<sup>15</sup> Zydenbos 1991:251. Madhva's hagiography, the *Sumadhavavijaya*, claims that Madhva debates a northern Muslim ruler in the "Turuṣka" language. This indicates not only awareness of a changing political landscape but a desire to be victorious within it.

<sup>16</sup> Siauve 1971. Also, Zydenbos has recently argued that Madhva's casteism is a compromise between staunch Smārta Brahmin elitism and Jaina and Vīraśaiva egalitarianism (2001:122). He is correct in pointing out that Madhva would like to appear both more tolerant than the Smārtas and less lax than the Śaivas, an agenda that is evident in his eclectic construction of the canon.

social position to spiritual destiny.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, however, by locating this doctrine of hierarchy in a rediscovered and fulfilled Veda that included not just additions from the deity Vāyu but popular Hindu texts such as the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, Madhva hoped to challenge egalitarian, anti-caste religious movements precisely through his own brand of populism.

Because this populism was inextricably linked to a hierarchical theology, Madhva may have intended his “entire sacred corpus” doctrine to address an audience that was primarily — but not exclusively — upper caste.<sup>18</sup> By redefining the parameters of the canon and articulating a unifying theme for “all sacred lore” that was based on a hierarchical ordering of deities, Madhva attempted to assert both upper-caste religious prestige and some shared identity among various “Hindu” groups. Thus, in the face of growing challenges from the heterodox traditions of Jainism and Islam as well as egalitarian forms of Śaiva devotionalism,<sup>19</sup> Madhva sought to organize the various “Hinduisms” of his milieu by plugging them into an inclusive yet explicitly Vaiṣṇava and hierarchical framework.

Finally, as will be most significant for this analysis, Madhva’s exegesis was popular among those Brahmins who saw in it an adherence to established exegetical norms, even as he reoriented those norms to suit his distinctive metaphysical agenda. Madhva’s doctrine of “all the *vidyās*” presented in his *ṚB* successfully combined ingenuity with traditionalism for many South Indian Brahmins precisely by updating notions of *vaidikatva* (“Vedic-ness”) in response to emerging religious needs. Of course, many opponents considered Madhva’s innovations

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<sup>17</sup> Sarma 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Both Zydenbos (2001:120–21) and Sarma (1999:600–8) provide examples from Madhva’s work of noteworthy, albeit narrowly conceived, exceptions to traditional caste rules.

<sup>19</sup> Unlike the case of Jainism, there is little direct influence of Basavaṇṇa’s Vīraśaivism on Madhva’s philosophy. However, I submit that Madhva presents Śaṅkara’s Advaita Vedānta as an intellectual juggernaut precisely because Śaṅkara’s monism threatened to give Vedic legitimation to egalitarian forms of devotionalism that were growing in popularity in Madhva’s milieu.



to open up the canon to too many possible interpretations, eviscerating its status as the standard of orthodoxy. But the very fact that Madhva's Vedic exegesis had appeal among some while generating controversy among others indicates that, although the category of Vedic orthodoxy was central to medieval South Indian Brahminical identity, there was no clear-cut definition of that orthodoxy. The very norms of Vedic exegesis were being reconsidered in response to religious and social change.

*Blurring the Boundaries: Madhva's Version of the Vedamūlatva Doctrine*

Although Madhva's *RB* is concerned, explicitly, with delineating the canon's timely transmission and, implicitly, with updating the canon to suit contemporary needs, he is well aware that the canon's validity rests upon the eternality of its truths. Like many Vedāntin exegetes, Madhva adheres to the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā doctrine of the Veda's unique beginninglessness or *anāditva*, its authorlessness or *apauruṣeyatva*, and its resultant innate validity or *svataḥmāna*. Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā exegesis, which had reached a canonical status several centuries prior to Madhva, was concerned with illuminating early Vedic statements on ritual and posited the Veda as uniquely unauthored, eternal, and innately valid in order to grant the Veda unquestionable religious authority and to guarantee its validity as a source for sacred truth.

While Vedāntin exegetes were primarily interested in the philosophical truths taught by the "end of the Veda"<sup>20</sup> or the Upaniṣads, they borrowed Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā's view of the Veda's distinctive metaphysical and epistemological status. They then had to reconcile the Veda's uniqueness with that of the ultimate reality it presents in the Upaniṣads, Brahman. Madhva borrows a tactic for doing this from his 11th-century Vaiṣṇava Vedāntin predecessor, Rāmānuja, who argued that the Veda represents Viṣṇu-as-Brahman's eternal thoughts regarding Himself and in this sense, depends upon Viṣṇu for its meaning and existence. In this way, the Veda functions as an irrefutable source

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<sup>20</sup> This is the literal meaning of the term "Vedānta."

of knowledge of Viṣṇu, while not competing with Him for the status of sole absolute.<sup>21</sup> Madhva cites an unknown passage from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* in his *Viṣṇutattvavīṇirṇaya* (VTN), v. 41 to make this point:

The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* says: “All the Vedas are eternal and in their eternal form they subsist in Viṣṇu’s mind. In each creation they are spoken out by him alone in the same form, in the same order, with the same letters and modes of utterance and not otherwise.”<sup>22</sup>

By adhering to this doctrine of the Veda’s uniquely eternal and unauthored status, Madhva upholds a bounded definition of the Vedic canon. This is true even when he presents his doctrine of *sarvavidyājāta* or “all sacred lore.” In *RB* verse 22, where Madhva begins to enumerate the transmission of all the vidyās from the mind of Viṣṇu to the human realm he states that “Bhagavān is the Sage of all sacred traditions but of the Vedas in particular.”<sup>23</sup> His fourteenth-century commentator, Jayatīrtha, explains in his *Ṭīkā* (*RBT*): “In particular, Bhagavān is the seer of the Vedas. The difference is that as far as “authored” or *pauruṣeya* statements are concerned, Viṣṇu sees them only after they come into being but the Vedas He sees all the time.”<sup>24</sup>

Jayatīrtha’s reference to *pauruṣeya* or “authored” traditions included in “all the vidyās” is related to Madhva’s version of the Vedamūlatva doctrine or the belief that certain non-eternal and authored texts are “rooted in the Veda” because they have been deliberately composed by Viṣṇu to illuminate the Veda’s teachings. Thus, while Madhva maintains that there is a fundamental difference between the eternal, unauthored Vedic corpus and the non-eternal, au-

<sup>21</sup> See Clooney 1987:680ff. regarding the implications of the Vedāpauruṣeyatva doctrine in Viśiṣṭādvaita.

<sup>22</sup> Raghavachar trans. VTN 41 nityā vedās samastās ca śāśvatā viṣṇubuddhigāḥ | sarge sarge ‘munaivaīta udgīryante tathaiva ca | tatkrameṇaiva tair varṇais tais svarair eva nānyathā |

<sup>23</sup> *RB* 22 munis tu sarvavidyānām bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ | viśeṣataś ca vedānām |

<sup>24</sup> *RBT* on 22 viśeṣataś ca vedānām bhagavān ṛṣiḥ | pauruṣeyavākyaṇām utpattyanantaram eva darśanam vedānām tu sarvadeti viśeṣaḥ |

thored traditions that are often designated *smṛti*, he also believes that those traditions that are rooted in the Veda have an eternal validity, even if their form is non-eternal. He says as much with regard to the Purāṇas in his *VTN*:

But the Purāṇas which agree with the Vedas in significance, are brought forth in each creation in new forms. Therefore they are not eternal. Their import, of course, is what it was in the previous epochs.<sup>25</sup>

Madhva's understanding of the Vedamūlatva doctrine has exegetical precedent in the work of the 11th-century Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedāntin, Yāmuna. Yāmuna argued in his *Āgama Prāmāṇyam* (II.53–80) for the validity of the sectarian, extra-Vedic Pañcarātra Āgamas primarily on the basis that they are rooted in the unauthored Veda and secondarily, on the basis that they are authored by the sole omniscient being, Viṣṇu.<sup>26</sup> Madhva borrows this logic but applies it much more broadly. In his *VTN*, he designates not only the Pañcarātra Āgamas as *Vedamūla* but also the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, the two Hindu epics, and all texts that agree with these. Furthermore, he claims that all of these traditions are *sadāgamas* or "true traditions" that can serve as a source of knowledge of the ultimate reality Viṣṇu.

The *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* states: "The right scriptures consist of the four Vedas beginning with the *Ṛgveda*, the *Bhārata*, the whole of the *Pañcarātrāgama*, the original *Rāmāyaṇa*, the Purāṇas corroborating these and all other works that follow these. Texts other than these are bad testimonies and through the latter Janārdana cannot be known."<sup>27</sup>

The above quote is a significant expansion of the canon beyond Yāmuna's definition not only because Madhva includes more traditions under the heading of *Vedamūla* or "rooted in the Veda" but also because he incorporates these *Vedamūla* traditions into the standard

<sup>25</sup> Raghavachar, trans. *VTN* 41 purāṇāni tadarthāni sarge sarge'nyathaiva tu | kriyante 'tastv anityāni tadarthāḥ pūrvasargavat |

<sup>26</sup> J.A.B. van Buitenen, trans. 1971.

<sup>27</sup> Raghavachar, trans. *VTN* 3 ṛgādyābhārataṃ caiva Pañcarātram athākḥilam | mūlarāmāyaṇaṃ caiva purāṇaṃ caitadātmakam | ye cānuyāyinastveṣāṃ sarve te ca sadāgamāḥ | durāgamās tadanye ye tair na jñeyo janārdanaḥ ||

of religious orthodoxy itself. Indeed, by proclaiming all texts which accord not just with the Veda but with any of the above-mentioned traditions as *sadāgamas*, Madhva attempts to establish parity between the Veda and selected extra-Vedic traditions. As we will see momentarily, Madhva takes this parity for granted in his presentation of the transmission of “all sacred lore” from the mind of Viṣṇu to the human realm.

While Madhva has some precedent for his view of the Vedamūlatva doctrine in Yāmuna, he is directly at odds with those exegetes who sought to contain the threat to the Veda’s distinctiveness implicit in this open-ended view of the canon. Halbfass has shown that the canonical exegetes, Śāṅkara and Kumārila, both use this doctrine of Vedamūlatva to create a hierarchical relationship between the Vedic canon and extra-Vedic, *smṛti* traditions by positing the Veda alone as the standard of sacred truth against which all other such claims must be measured.<sup>28</sup> Madhva was clearly aware of this understanding of the Vedamūlatva doctrine since he selectively invokes it himself. In his discussion of this issue in the *Anuvyākhyāna*, verses 94–95 and verses 112–120, Madhva rejects the Śaivāgamas on the grounds that they are merely *pauruṣeya* traditions, composed by Śiva to proclaim his own greatness and whose message contradicts the essentially Vaiṣṇava theme of the uniquely unauthored Veda. However, opponents would argue that Madhva has arrived at this Vaiṣṇava message precisely by reading the Veda through the filter of these extra-Vedic sectarian sources, whose parity with the Veda is not accepted by all. Thus, while for Śāṅkara and Kumārila, the designation of *Vedamūla* is theoretically only conferred upon a tradition that has been found to concord with the Veda, for Madhva the *Vedamūla* designation often precedes and informs his Vedic exegesis.

As Madhva points out, there is precedence for this approach as well. In *ṚB* verses 22 and 23, Madhva justifies his understanding of Vedamūlatva by citing the well-known *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (*BAU*) verse (4.5.11) in which Brahman is said to emit all religious teachings as His breath. Significantly for Madhva, these teachings are

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<sup>28</sup> Halbfass 1991:58–61.

not limited to the Veda but also include the epic traditions (*itihāsa*) and the *Purāṇas*:

The *Ṛgveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Atharva* and *Angirasa Veda*, the *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, secret teachings, *śloka*s, *sūtra*s, explanations, and glosses are the breath of that Great Being.<sup>29</sup>

Madhva then juxtaposes this citation from the *BAU* with a citation from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* which speaks of Hayagrīva, one of Viṣṇu's ten *avatāras*, emitting the Vedas as His breath. For Madhva, the fact that the *BAU* speaks of a single emission of the Vedas together with the *Purāṇas* enables him to cite the *Bhāgavata* in a way that specifies that this "Great Being" is Viṣṇu. Thus, Madhva's understanding of the *Vedamūlatva* principle is vindicated by a Vedic text itself, and he does not need to measure the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* against the *BAU* because the two can be consulted interchangeably to illuminate suprasensible reality.

While this understanding of *Vedamūlatva* is at odds with that of Kumārila and Śankara, Madhva's fourteenth-century commentator Jayatīrtha approves of Madhva's methods here, although his emphasis on them could indicate a presupposed objection:

In order to show that in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.18) [which speaks of Brahman emitting the Veda as breath], the word *veda* stands for *sarvavidyāpara*, or 'all sacred knowledge,' Madhva quotes a second Vedic text, the *BAU*, which explicitly mentions the *Purāṇas*, etc. Since in both cases, the name Viṣṇu does not appear, Madhva quotes *Purāṇas*, etc.<sup>30</sup>

### *Hierarchical Cosmogonies of All Sacred Lore*

In his *RB* presentation of all the *vidyās*, Madhva claims that the intimacy between the Veda and selected *pauruṣeya* traditions is not

<sup>29</sup> *BAU* 4.5.11 asya mahato bhūtasya niśvasitam etad yadṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo 'tharvāṅgirasa itihāsapurāṇam vidyā upaniṣadaḥ ślokaḥ sūtrāṇi anuvyākhyānāni vyākhyānānyasyaivaitāni niśvasitāni.

<sup>30</sup> *RBT* on 22–23 yo brahmāṇam iti śrutau vedapadam sarvavidyāparam iti jñāpayitum dvitīyaśrutiyudāharaṇam || ubhayatrāpi viṣṇor apratīteḥ purāṇādyudāharaṇam iti |

merely that the latter are rooted in the former. It is also the fact that, while the Veda may be eternal, its manifestation in time and place occurs simultaneously with the manifestation of those *pauruṣeya* traditions that are rooted in it. If we understand *śruti* to mean “that which was heard by the ancient ṛṣis [or “seers”] as part of a primordial cognition in the beginning of creation,”<sup>31</sup> then Madhva’s assertion in his *RB* that Viṣṇu reveals the Vedic corpus together with certain *Vedamūla* traditions effectively incorporates these *pauruṣeya* traditions into the primordial cognition and thus, into the category of *śruti*. To bolster this image, Madhva explicitly contradicts his own adherence to the Veda’s *unique* eternity when he says in *RB* verse 27 that Viṣṇu sends forth all the *vidyās* or sacred traditions eternally and yet reveals them together at a specific moment to the other deities:

The *Sātvatasamhitā* says: “Bādarāyaṇa, who resides in the heart, sends forth all the *vidyās* [sacred traditions] — beginning with the sound *om* — everywhere, for all time. First [he dispatches them] to the deity Brahṁa.”<sup>32</sup>

Madhva’s redefinition of *śruti* as containing both the bounded, uniquely eternal and unauthored Vedic canon and select, authored traditions that are non-eternal in form, is further evident in Madhva’s use of the term *ṛṣi* or ‘seer’. The notion that the *śruti* revelation was received and transmitted by ancient seers is an established canonical one that bolsters the Veda’s uniqueness as “that which was heard.” It also establishes the distinctive religious role of the Brahmin priests who are charged with preserving this oral tradition accurately. Several of the early *Vedāṅga* texts (4th century BCE – 4th century CE) — self-proclaimed “limbs of the Veda” — state that one cannot truly know the Veda without knowing the *ṛṣi*-association of its various components.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Holdrege 1994:37.

<sup>32</sup> *RB* 27 omkārapūrvakā vidyāḥ prerayaty akhileṣvapi | sadaiva brahmaṇe pūrvam iti sātvatasamhitāll

<sup>33</sup> E.g., *Bṛhaddevatā* VIII.126 aviditvā ṛṣim chando daivatam yogam eva ca yo ‘dhyāpayejjapedvāpi pāpīyāñjāyate tu saḥ | Macdonnell translates this as follows: “He who without knowing the seer, the metre, the divinity, and the application should teach

Madhva draws upon this canonical tradition of affiliating seers with specific sections of *śruti* but reworks it to make it accord with his own exegetical agenda. In distinction to the traditional accounts of the seers found in the Vedāṅga literature such as the *Sarvānukramaṇi* (4th century CE) and the *Bṛhaddevatā* (1st century CE), Madhva's *RB* argues that the initial transmission of all the *vidyās* occurs through a hierarchy of deities or a *devatātāratamya* (*DT*).<sup>34</sup> The deities in this hierarchy function as *ṛṣis*<sup>35</sup> with those highest up the ladder receiving the originally whole sacred corpus directly from Viṣṇu Himself, who, according to Madhva, takes on the identity of Vyāsa-Bādarāyana or the "arranger" of the sacred texts. The sacred corpus is then transmitted from one rung of deity to the next until eventually it reaches the human *ṛṣis*, who, according to Madhva, are enumerated in Vedāṅga literature, beginning with names like Madhuchandas (*RB* v. 106). In contrast to these better known discussions of the term *ṛṣi*, Madhva's *RB* illuminates the earlier and lesser known stages of the transmission process wherein *sarvavidyājāta* subdivides into the larger branches such as the entire Vedic corpus and all the Pañcarātra Āgamas. Individual deities — many of whom have Vaiṣṇava significance — come to be associated as *ṛṣis* with these different portions, meaning that there are seers not only of the Veda but of those *pauruṣeya* traditions that are rooted in it.

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or even mutter [a formula] shall fare the worse." Jayatīrtha quotes a similar verse in his introduction to this section of the *RB*. See Stoker 2000b:52.

<sup>34</sup> In an earlier article (Stoker 2000a), I analyze Madhva's exegetical strategies for locating the *DT* doctrine in the *Rgveda*. One of these strategies is to affiliate the deities with the canonical concepts of *ṛṣi*, *chandas*, and *devatā*. In that discussion, I present Madhva's comments on the deities-as-*ṛṣis* in a single condensed format that follows Jayatīrtha's efforts at integrating Madhva's divergent presentations. Here, I present samples of Madhva's divergent presentations and offer explanations for their differences.

<sup>35</sup> Madhva uses the terms *ṛṣi* ("seer"), *muni* ("sage"), and *guru* ("teacher") interchangeably whereas Jayatīrtha adheres consistently to the term *ṛṣi*. Jayatīrtha probably does this to highlight Madhva's multiple allusions to the *ṛṣi*, *chandas*, and *devatā* exegetical tradition.

Madhva's doctrine of a hierarchy of deities or *devatātāratamya* is central to his metaphysics, epistemology, and soteriology and thus, it is not surprising that he presents it both as a key doctrine of the sacred corpus and as the means by which that corpus is revealed to the world. Madhva's unique doctrine of a gradation of deities supports his emphasis on difference (*bheda*) as a fundamental aspect of reality and is critical to his rejection of monist readings of the Veda. In contrast to Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita interpretations which identify all souls with the ultimate reality, Brahman, Madhva's reading stipulates that each Hindu deity—and each human being—occupies a particular, permanent position in the sacred order on the grounds of his or her innate and relative capacities (*yogyatā*). Thus, Viṣṇu-as-Brahman is permanently situated at the top rung of the spiritual ladder precisely because His innate qualities exceed those of all other gods and because He lacks all faults. Other deities are situated at different rungs in accordance with their individual configurations of qualities (*guṇas*) and faults (*doṣas*):

Absolute faultlessness is the privilege of Viṣṇu alone whereas it exists to a varying degree among the middle beings. [...] The mentioning of faults [of different deities] is purposeful for making known the hierarchy among them.<sup>36</sup>

By using the canonical concept of *ṛṣi* to affiliate his independently formulated DT concept with the transmission of “all the *vidyās*,” Madhva attempts to open up the canon to a new reading in which hierarchy and its attendant values of plurality and difference are validated. Madhva presents his doctrine of hierarchy not simply as a specific list of deities but as a general metaphysical and epistemological principle structuring both the universe (which includes, of course, human society) and the meaning of the sacred texts. It is a recurrent theme throughout this section of the *ṚB* that the sacred traditions have layers of meaning which are comprehended by beings in accordance with their innate capacities:

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<sup>36</sup> *ṚB* 75, c,d nirdoṣataiva viṣṇos tu kramān madhyagateshvapi | *ṚB* 78 a,b tāratamasya vijñaptiyai vaco doṣasya cārthavat |



Whatever type of meaning is suitable to a [given individual's] capacity, that is [the meaning which is] to be understood. Thus it is clear. A sentence in the *Ṛgsamhita* says: "This rule is stated succinctly as, 'The Vedas are so-called because they have endlessly different meanings on account of the fact that they are circumstanced by commentaries, etc.'" [...] Therefore, Brahmā and others who promote knowledge are to be bowed to and honored in the order in which they qualify as *gurus*. Only Keśava [is honored] in a distinct way. Beginning with one's *guru* and up to Viṣṇu, the *gurus* are higher and higher. There is no result other than through that order.<sup>37</sup>

This idea of a universal intellectual hierarchy strongly implies worldly Brahmin religious privilege, particularly in light of Madhva's adherence to norms restricting access to Vedic study to the twice-born castes.<sup>38</sup> By arguing that each deity be worshipped in accordance with his/her relative understanding of the canonical texts, Madhva ordains hierarchical access to these texts — and the rewards that knowledge of them can confer — as an ineluctable feature of the cosmos. Indeed, in *RB* v. 56, Madhva claims that it is only by knowing the hierarchy of deities that one is able to achieve the canon's highest religious reward, *mokṣa*, or liberation from the cycle of rebirth, *saṃsāra*:

Only by knowing the hierarchy of deities and Keśava, who is supreme above all, is one freed from [*saṃsāra*], but there is no other way.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, however, by claiming that the sacred texts have layers of meaning, Madhva acknowledges the potential significance of the various exegetical traditions put forward by a broad range of intellects even as he strongly implies that his reading is superior. He thereby presents his hierarchical ordering of reality as both inclusive and delimiting; the sacred texts speak differently to different individuals but

<sup>37</sup> *RB* 102–105 yādṛṣo yogyatām yāyāt sa jñeyo 'rthas tathā sphuṭam | anantaniyamair yuktānantārthaviśeṣiṇaḥ || vedā iti samāsenā niyamo 'yam samīritaḥ | ṛksamhitāgatam vākyaṃ iti cānyanniyāmakam || tasmāt vandyāśca pūjyāśca brahmādyā jñānayojakāḥ | gurutvena kramenaiva viśeṣaṇaiva keśavaḥ || ārabhya svagurum yāvad viṣṇur evottarottarāḥ | kramām niṣphalatā 'nyatra . . .

<sup>38</sup> See Sarma 1999:598ff.

<sup>39</sup> *RB* 56 devatātāratamyam ca sarvotkrṣṭam ca keśavam | jñātvaiva mucyate hyasmān nānyathā tu kathaṇcana ||

they speak most clearly and significantly to Madhva himself. In this way, Madhva undercuts competing interpretations of the Veda, and visions of the canon, not by denying their validity entirely but through the more circumspect assertion that such interpretations are, ultimately, subordinate to his. Furthermore, Madhva goes on to assert that because the sacred texts fall into decreasingly capable hands, the transmission of “all the *vidyās*” is innately faulty and in need of correction. As we shall see momentarily, Madhva then presents himself as uniquely capable of providing this correction due to his own lofty position in the hierarchy.

According to Madhva, the placement of the deity-*ṛṣis* in the transmission process reflects the number of times they need to hear the canon recited before they are able to learn it which in turn reflects their intellectual capacity. In some portions of his *RB*, Madhva maintains that at each subsequent level of the divine hierarchy, greater numbers of the deity-*ṛṣis* are necessary because each individual god is able to assimilate a smaller portion of *sarvavidyājāta*. In one version of the transmission process presented in the *RB*, Viṣṇu initiates the transmission by reciting the sacred texts to Brahmā who is designated the seer of all sacred revelation.<sup>40</sup> Brahmā, who is able to assimilate all the sacred traditions “by merely a single recitation,” then passes the corpus on to the next level of beings, Garuḍa (whom Madhva also calls Suparṇa and/or Vipa) and Śeṣa (or the “King of Snakes,” Nāgarāṭ). These two prominent Vaiṣṇava deities, known for their role as Viṣṇu’s helpmates, become affiliated as *ṛṣis* with the Vedic and the Pāñcarātric traditions respectively, by virtue of the fact that they hear the transmission secondarily from Brahmā. The implication is that each is affiliated

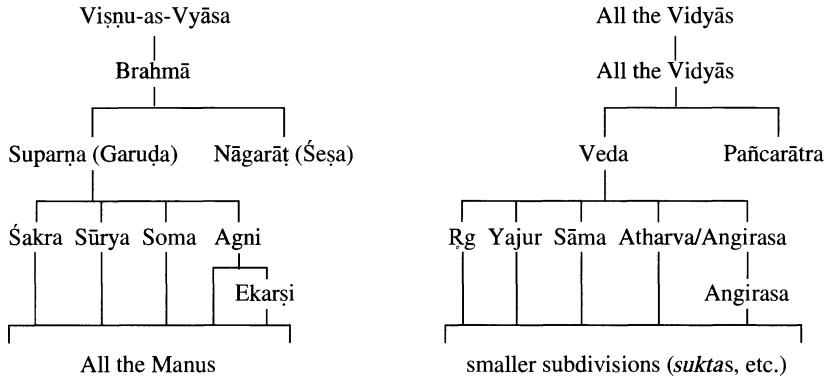
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<sup>40</sup> In part to show Vedic support for his *devatātāratamya* doctrine, Madhva attempts to validate Brahmā’s lofty status with reference to the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* statement, 6.18 “Who at first appointed the Brahmin and delivered to him the Veda.” In a typical instance of Madhva’s reworking of the Veda to validate an independently formulated doctrine, he renders the word ‘Brahman’ to mean not the Brahmin caste as is traditionally understood, but the deity Brahmā. Furthermore, as we have already seen, he takes the word Veda to mean *sarvavidyājāta*. Thus, Brahmā, and not the Brahmin caste, becomes the recipient not just of the Veda but of all the *Vedamūla* traditions.

with a smaller portion of the corpus because he must hear the traditions recited an additional time:

Suparṇa and Nāgarāṭ are designated as sages — Suparṇa for the entire Veda and Nāgarāṭ for the Pañcarātra — because they are the second recipients. (v. 30)<sup>41</sup>

At this point, Madhva abandons further description of the subdivision of the Pañcarātra tradition and focuses only on the Veda. Suparṇa transmits the Vedic corpus to the next level of deity-ṛṣi at which point the Veda is subdivided into the four Vedas (plus one subdivision of the *Atharvaveda* into *Atharva* and *Angirasa* sections) and affiliated, respectively, with Śakra, Sūrya, Soma, Agni, and Ekarṣi. Finally the four Vedas are passed on to the super-human Manus who are affiliated as ṛṣis only with individual *suktas* and other minor subdivisions:



To confuse matters, Madhva juxtaposes this version of the transmission of all the *vidyās* with a more generous version in which greater numbers of deities are incorporated into each level of the transmission.<sup>42</sup> While the underlying logic remains the same, this presentation contravenes the above one-to-one correspondence of specific de-

<sup>41</sup> *RB* 30 suparṇo 'khlavedānām pañcarātrasya nāgarāṭ | dvitīyapratipattṛtvān muniv samprakīrtitau ||

<sup>42</sup> As mentioned above, my earlier discussion (Stoker 2000a) of Madhva's use of the term *ṛṣi* to establish his *DT* doctrine fuses Madhva's various presentations of the transmission process, in accordance with Jayatīrtha's commentary.

ity with individual portion of *sarvavidyājāta*, a fact which Madhva acknowledges when saying in verse 36 that “there may be many [*ṛṣis*] even for only one hymn or one verse.”<sup>43</sup> In this version, the wind-god, Vāyu, and Viṣṇu’s spouse, Śrī, as well as the wives of Vāyu and Brahmā are included in the first level of transmission and are affiliated as *ṛṣis* with all of sacred literature. Śiva-Rudra (who is often considered by Madhva to be an opponent of Vaiṣṇavism), his wife, and the wives of Śeṣa and Vipā are included in the second stage of transmission. The wives of Śakra, Soma, Sūrya, Agni and Ekarṣi are added at the third level, so that the transmission process now looks as follows:

**Deity-ṛṣi:**

Viṣṇu → Śrī → Brahmā and Vāyu → their wives  
 → Rudra, Śeṣa, Suparṇa/Vipā → their wives  
 → Śakra, Sūrya, Soma, Ekarṣi, Agni → their wives  
 → the Manus

**Tradition/Subdivision:**

All the *Vidyās*  
 Pañcarātra, Veda  
*Rg, Yajur, Sāma, Atharva,*  
*Angirasa*  
*Suktas, etc.*

There are several reasons why Madhva alters his original presentation of all sacred lore’s transmission. As I have argued at length elsewhere,<sup>44</sup> one is that Madhva intends his DT doctrine to organize and reconcile competing devotional traditions within the various *śruti* and *smṛti* texts of his milieu. He therefore abandons his original one-to-one correspondence of deity-*ṛṣi* to sacred tradition because such a formulation leaves out too many important deities from within the Vaiṣṇava pantheon and does not address local favor for non-Vaiṣṇava gods. Śrī and Vāyu are key to Madhva’s theology and therefore must be *ṛṣis* of the entire sacred corpus and not just its smaller subdivisions. Śiva-Rudra and his spouse must be included in order to pay heed to local

<sup>43</sup> *RB* 36 te caikasyāpi bahavaḥ syuḥ sūktasya ṛca eva vā |

<sup>44</sup> Stoker 2000a.

Śaiva sensibilities even as Madhva tempers that devotionism by placing Śiva in an inferior position to the loftiest Vaiṣṇava gods. By claiming to identify the cosmic position of all the gods in terms of their affiliation with the sacred texts, Madhva hopes to create a *samanvaya*, or 'unifying theme' for "all sacred lore." Thus, Madhva's enumeration of the *DT* appears to embrace all forms of devotionism even as it imposes limits on the religious authority of non-Vaiṣṇava deities and their affiliate textual traditions. Once again, "it is the *DT*'s very inclusivity that makes it a totalistic classificatory system capable of creating vast religious significance for the limitations it imposes."<sup>45</sup>

An equally important reason why Madhva presents multiple scenarios regarding the *vidyās*' transmission is to evoke an open-ended image of the canon that creates a conceptual space for expanding its conventional parameters. It is notable that Madhva's transmission of all the *vidyās* does not explicitly mention the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas even though this contradicts his earlier assertion in *RB* v. 22–23 (quoted above) that the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas are part of "all sacred lore." This omission seems even stranger given that Madhva cites the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas extensively throughout this section of the *RB* precisely to validate the *devatātāratamya* doctrine. However, all of Madhva's citations from these Purāṇas are not verifiable and fall into the category of Madhva's allegedly fabricated sources. While Madhva takes care in this section of the *RB* to highlight Vedic narratives that imply hierarchical relationships among the gods,<sup>46</sup> Siauue points out that none of the texts that explicitly refer to Madhva's hierarchy of deities are known.<sup>47</sup> By immediately revising his original statements on the transmission of all the *vidyās*, Madhva strongly implies that this discussion is not the final statement on the matter and he leaves the door open for future additions

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<sup>45</sup> Stoker 2000a:49.

<sup>46</sup> Stoker 2000a:60–62.

<sup>47</sup> Siauue 1971:13.

and changes.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, as we shall now see, Madhva's belief that the transmission of the canon occurs through decreasingly capable hands makes the process innately faulty; it is only Madhva, an incarnation of one of the loftiest deities in the hierarchy, who is able to reclaim the canon's lost truths.

### *Madhva's Unknown Śrutis in the R̥gbhāṣya*

It is a recurrent theme throughout Madhva's work that during the transmission and subdivision of the sacred canon, loss and interpolation occur. In his *VTN*, v. 41, Madhva quotes an unknown passage from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* which states the following:

“[The Vedas] were heard by the sages in previous lives and through the grace of Vāsudeva they manifest themselves to those sages in the present life in parts and *not in their entirety*.”<sup>49</sup> [emphasis mine]

In his *Mahābhārataatātparyanirṇaya* II.3–8, Madhva states the following:

Some people interpolate into the texts in some places, delete [passages] in other places, mix up [passages] in other places due to carelessness; elsewhere, they falsify them. Although the texts are not totally lost, they are disorganized. Other texts have been mostly lost since the most important portion has not been handed down. This is the state of the *Mahābhārata*. If it is difficult even for the gods to understand it, how much more is its meaning confused [for humans]?<sup>50</sup>

In a later section of the *RB* (vv. 160 to 163), Madhva distinguishes between the original “*mūla*” Veda found in the mind of Viṣṇu and transmitted to the loftiest *ṛṣis*, and the subsequent divided forms of

<sup>48</sup> Indeed, in *RB* v. 25, Madhva mentions Dakṣa and Sanaka as vaguely involved in the transmission, but he subsequently drops these names in his more detailed description of the cosmogony.

<sup>49</sup> Ragahvachar, trans. janmāntare śrutās tās tu vāsudevaprasādataḥ | munīnāṃ pratibhāsyanti bhāgenaiva na sarvaśaḥ ||

<sup>50</sup> Mesquita 2000, trans. kvacid granthān prakṣipanti kvacid antartātān apil kuryuḥ kvacid ca vyatyāsaṃ pramādāt kvacid anyathā || anutsannā api granthā vyākulā iti sarvaśaḥ || utsannāḥ prāyaśaḥ sarve kotyamśo ‘pi na vartate || grantho ‘py evam vilulitaḥ kimv artho devadurgamaḥ |

the Veda which are marked both by lacunae (*udvāpa*) and accretions (*āvāpa*). These divided forms, according to Jayatīrtha, are called 'the *upaveda*' and the '*avāntaraveda*' respectively, and each contains a greater number of subdivisions, which enable students of the Veda both to receive and recite smaller portions. Madhva maintains that Viṣṇu Himself chooses to condense and reorganize the boundless Veda in order to make it accessible to His students: "But because the Vedas are endless, Deva made a condensed version in accordance with their main essence."<sup>51</sup> This reorganization involves subdividing the Veda into different branches which contain verses and other subsections: "Having divided up one verse from another, Prabhu made the *Ṛgveda*. And, in the same way, he [divided up] the *yajurs* from the original recitation and the *sāmans* from the original *sāmaveda*." Indeed, from this Purāṇic statement, the divisions [of the Veda are known]."<sup>52</sup>

However, Madhva then asserts that the "students of Viṣṇu" (i.e., the deity-*ṛṣis*) lose some of these traditions or put them in the wrong order, compromising the meaning of the canon:

Some of these [hymns] are lost by the students because they are students. [For example,] a deficiency in meaning is seen in the following *Ṛgvedic* verse: "*mānaḥstena*..." And some [verses] from the utterances of [the *ṛṣi*] Śunaśepa, appear elsewhere, so the perception [of this part of the Veda] is in disorder. Thus there is no common order [between the original Veda in Viṣṇu's mind and the subsequent divided forms of the Veda]."<sup>53</sup>

While Madhva provides a couple of specific examples here of how the transmission process compromises the form of the 'original' Veda, he does not explain how these passages are deficient in meaning. As Tiwari points out, Madhva revisits this issue in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*

<sup>51</sup> *RB* 164 anantatvāt tu vedānāṃ prāyaḥ karmānusārataḥ | sankṣepam kṛtavān devaḥ |

<sup>52</sup> *RB* 161-62a ṛcaḥ sa ṛca uddhṛtya ṛgvedaṃ kṛtavān prabhuḥ | yajūṃṣi nigadāc caiva tathā sāmāni sāmataḥ" evaṃ purāṇavacanād uddhṛtā. . . |

<sup>53</sup> *RB* 162c,d-63 [ṛcaḥ] āpannāḥ śiṣyatac chiṣyakair imāḥ | mānaḥsteneti pūrvāsu hyūnatā dṛśyate 'rthataḥ | Śunaśēpoditābhyas ca paṭhyante 'nyantra kāścana | atrāpy akramato dṛṣṭir iti naikakramo bhavet ||

III.4.49. Yet Tiwari's analysis shows that even here Madhva does not present compelling evidence for any flaw in these passages and he is unique among exegetes in maintaining their deficiency.<sup>54</sup>

Madhva seems to use this notion of a faulty transmission as a broader exegetical opportunity. He is unique among Brahmin exegetes in presenting himself as an *avatāra* of a Hindu god. By claiming to be an incarnation of Vāyu, one of Viṣṇu's helpmates who is one of the loftiest deities in the hierarchy and one of the first to receive the full form of the traditions that comprise "all sacred lore," Madhva is able to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of the Veda; indeed, to reveal to us the Veda's lost portions.

Madhva is certainly not the first or only Vedic exegete to maintain that there are lost portions of the Veda. Sheldon Pollock has shown that both Purva-Mīmāṃsākas Śābara and Kumārila viewed the entire category of *smṛti* or 'that which is remembered' as that which Brahmin authorities remember from a lost Veda. This understanding of *smṛti* renders the Vedic canon extremely open-ended by including not just what Vedic texts say but also the various ways in which Brahmin authorities interpret them.<sup>55</sup> It is arguable that Madhva's claim to be an *avatāra* of Vāyu represents one such interpretive practice, and therefore is in line with Purva-Mīmāṃsā understandings of the Veda's parameters.

However, Kumārila also acknowledges the problems that the lost Veda doctrine poses to Vedic exegesis by opening up the extant canon to any and all interpretations, jeopardizing its status as the standard of orthodoxy. Kumārila attempts to limit the parameters of the lost Veda doctrine by arguing in *Tantravārttika* 113 (on *MS* I.3.4) that it is wrong to presume lost Vedic texts in order to validate beliefs that contradict the Veda or to presume "a 'total destruction' (*uccheda*) of whole 'branches' (*śākha*) of the Vedic tradition."<sup>56</sup> To many critics, this is exactly what Madhva does by citing much more extensively than any

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<sup>54</sup> Tiwari 1976:123ff.

<sup>55</sup> Pollock 1990.

<sup>56</sup> Halbfass 1991:61.



other Vedic exegete from sources that are not generally known and by using these citations to read the Veda in ways that challenge established understandings. Appayya Dīkṣita says the following regarding Madhva's *Brahmasūtra* interpretation in his *Madhvatantramukhamardana*:

But Madhva's [*Brahmasūtra*] interpretation differs in almost every way [from other Vedānta schools]. This difference [manifests itself] in the meanings [that Madhva elicits] that are not recognized by other [Vedānta systems] and that Madhva has made up himself. [He puts forward] as evidence, putative statements from *śrutis* such as the *Turaśruti*, the *Kamaṭhaśruti*, the *Mātharaśruti*, etc. as well as statements from *smṛtis* which agree with these like the *Adhyātma* and the *Bhaviṣat*, etc. and [all of] which are absolutely unknown. In order to refute the doubt regarding the validity of these statements, Madhva claims "I am the third *avatāra* of Vāyu after Hanumān and Bhīmasena." As evidence of this he himself furnishes an example of a[n unknown] *smṛti* statement "The first [*avatāra*] is Hanumān, the second is Bhīmasena, the third is Pūrṇaprajña<sup>57</sup> who is the agent of Bhagavān's actions." And he interprets the Ṛgvedic mantra '*baḷitthā tadvapuṣe dhāyi darśatam*' as meaning that he is the third *avatāra* of Vāyu, [an interpretation] that he has made up and that shows that as a general rule, [Madhva's interpretations] transgress the boundaries of credibility.<sup>58</sup>

While many of Madhva's commentators point out that citations from *śrutis* which are no longer extant are found in many commentators' works, they also reveal a level of discomfort with Madhva's citations from these sources. In the section of the *RB* that presents the transmission of all the *vidyās* (v. 22–106), a full third of all sources that Madhva cites are clearly unknown to his 14th century commentator,

<sup>57</sup> Pūrṇaprajña is one of Madhva's given names.

<sup>58</sup> Translation follows Mesquita 2000:31. *MTMM* Ānandatīrthiye tu yojane prāyas sarvatraiva prakārabhedaḥ | so 'py anyeṣām asampratipanneṣu svamātrakalpīteṣu artheṣu | tatra ca tura [...] śrutyādivacanānīti tadanusārinī adhyātma [...] bhaviṣyatparvādivacanānīti cātyantāprasiddhānām eva vacanānām sāksītayopanyāsaḥ | tadupanyāsa prasaktasvānāptatvaśankāparihāryaya hanumadbhīmasenakrameṇa vāyoḥ svayam tṛtīyāvatāra ity udghoṣas | tatra ca sāksītayā "prathamō hanumān nāma dvitīyō bhīmasenakaḥ | pūrṇaprajñas tṛtīyas tu bhagavatkāryasādhakaḥ" || iti smṛtīvacanam astīti svayam eva tadudāharaṇam | baḷitthā tadvapuṣe dhāyi darśatam ity ādyṛgvedamantrasya svakalpita vāyvatāratraya paratayā pradarśakam ityādi prāmāṇikamaryādālanghanam bhūyasā dṛśyate |

Jayatīrtha who is never able to supply a longer version of these quotes in his *Ṭīkā*. Furthermore, Jayatīrtha often sounds defensive regarding their existence. In his comments on *RB* 1.1.1, Jayatīrtha defends Madhva's citation from a text called 'Vyāsa's *Nirukti*' as follows:

[...], henceforward, in the discussion of the rules regarding the order of the *suktas*, etc., these statements [from *Vyāsa's Nirukti*] should be understood as having the strength of a special *Śāstra* [traditional teaching]. Since Madhva's *RB* is in accordance with the older *niruktis* and other such texts, any disagreement with more recent *niruktis* should be disregarded.<sup>59</sup>

In his commentary on *RB* verses 56–57, Jayatīrtha highlights the ambiguous status of these unknown *śrutis* by using the term *prasiddha* meaning 'well known' to refer to Vedic and other authoritative traditions in contrast to these other texts cited by Madhva. For example, Madhva cites a text called the *Piṅgaśruti* in *RB* verses 56–57 as stating that only by knowing the hierarchy of deities is one freed from *samsāra*. When he concludes with the phrase "So says the *Piṅgaśruti* and this is seen in every way here," Jayatīrtha glosses the word 'here' to mean not within the *Piṅgaśruti* itself but "here, especially within the well-known (*prasiddha*) *śrutis*."<sup>60</sup>

Madhva himself seems to acknowledge that these *śrutis* have a different status from other texts. Madhva's citations from these unknown sources are often longer and more detailed than those from well-known sources like the Upaniṣads and he takes care to name them when citing them, something he does not do when citing a well-known source. While these practices may reflect Madhva's desire to give the fullest picture of what these texts say, thereby inviting scrutiny and comment, the texts are not utilized to make a reasoned argument but rather as evidence of certain realities that are otherwise inaccessible to us. For

<sup>59</sup> *RBT* on vv. 8–9 *evam uttaratrāpi suktādikramaniyame kāraṇāni viśeṣaśāstrabalena jñātavyān īti pradarśanārtham idam uktam | cīrantana-niruktyādyanusāreṇa pravṛtte 'smad vyākhyāne 'rvācīnaniruktyādivisamvādo nādaraṇīya ity etadapy anena sūcitam bhavati ||*

<sup>60</sup> *RBT* on 57 *sarvaśo viṣṇoḥ sarvottamatvādikam dṛśyate atreti prācuryābhiprāyam | yadvā atra ca prasiddhāsu api śrutiṣvityarthaḥ.*

instance, Madhva never cites an established text that explicitly refers to the doctrine of the *devatātāratamya*. He only evinces citations from sources like the *Barkuśruti* (v. 66), the *Turaśruti* (v. 67) and the *Piñgaśruti* (v. 74) that explicitly mention this concept. Since we have no other means of knowledge for the cosmogony of all the *vidyās* than the sacred texts themselves, Madhva's exegesis requires that we view these texts as authoritative. This aspect of the problem is not addressed by Madhva and Jayatīrtha skirts the issue by trying to find 'real' *śruti* texts that say the same thing as these unfamiliar traditions.

### Conclusion

While many of Madhva's critics viewed Madhva's expansion of the Veda's parameters as a self-serving projection of his independently formulated philosophy onto a body of texts deemed canonical, others found his reconstituted Veda with a new message of difference, devotionism, and hierarchy compelling. Madhva's Vedic exegesis sought to assert the eternality of Brahmin privilege by emphasizing difference and hierarchy as fundamental facets of being and by locating these doctrines in the established domain of Brahminical authority, the Veda. This agenda was complicated, however, by Madhva's refutation of Upaniṣadic monism which sometimes forced him to alter the form of Vedic statements and by his simultaneously absorptive yet delimiting responses to the religious plurality of his milieu which required him to articulate an overarching theme for very diverse religious traditions.

Thus, while Madhva's philosophy was informed by the Veda, it was not exclusively Vedic as Śāṅkara, Kumārila, Vedānta Deśika or Appayya Dīkṣita might define it. These thinkers themselves disagreed on the Veda's core truths but many of Madhva's critics agreed that his particular definition of the canon's parameters opened the Veda up to too many interpretations, eviscerating its status as the criterion of orthodoxy. Of course, Madhva's understanding of the Veda as both a bounded text with a distinct sacred authority and a more open-ended, ongoing revelation was neither unique nor unproblematic. Following J.Z. Smith's argument about sacred persistence, F. Smith's

analysis (1994) of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*'s self-proclaimed status as *Purāṇaveda* asserts that it is only possible to preserve the Vedic canon through transformation, a process that threatens the very notion of preservation. Madhva's concept of all sacred lore or *sarvavidyājāta*, preserves the Veda's significance precisely by redefining its form to make its content more responsive to contemporary religious needs.

Both the positive and negative reactions to Madhva's exegesis indicate that while the category of Vedic orthodoxy was central to late medieval South Indian Brahminical identity, there was no singular, clear-cut definition of that orthodoxy. Rather, the entire notion of Vedic orthodoxy was being reconsidered in response to shifting religious sensibilities. These shifts in turn reflected broader social and political change such as the growing prestige of Jainism in Madhva's region, the egalitarian monism of Basavaṇṇa's Vīraśaivism, and the politically destabilizing incursions of Islam into the South Indian peninsula. In the face of such challenges to Brahminical authority, Madhva and his peers retreated into a hierarchical theology that safeguarded their religious power and prestige. At the same time, however, they rooted this spiritual hierarchy in a deliberately eclectic canon, whose truths could only be organized and articulated by a divinely inspired exegete.

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## THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE POSTCOMMUNIST UKRAINE:

*History, Modern Status, Perspectives*

LYUDMYLA FILIPOVYCH and ANATOLY KOLODNY

Post-Soviet Ukrainian society has gone through drastic changes that have to be considered both at a secular and a theological level; the same can be said of Ukrainian society's attitude toward religion. The secular analysis of religion, including its individual and social dimensions, is now taking place within the framework of religious studies, the human sciences approach to religion being somewhat new in Ukraine. On the other hand, the theological interpretation of traditional and nontraditional religion is undergoing a reawakening. The causes for the undeveloped status of religious studies and theology have to do with the absence of Ukrainian statehood and Ukrainian churches, due to the domination of foreign and communist regimes. This domination led to the prohibition of religion as well as of its study; in present-day Ukraine, however, theology and religious studies appear as specific forms of knowledge about religion, and as subjects taught at schools and universities.

### *Religious Studies*

This secular approach to religion is now a school subject in Ukraine. In Soviet times, a new area of knowledge, scientific atheism, was created; religious studies were a critical component of this new field. Scientific atheism had two aspects, positive, that is, factual knowledge about religion, and critical, an aspect with which some researchers became identified. The study of religion was understood not as knowledge about religion but as a critique of it. This was a distortion of the subject of religious studies, of its meaning and sense; it placed the emphasis not on the research of religious phenomena, but on the incon-



sistencies of religious beliefs and worldviews. In other words, without an atheistic bias, religious studies did not have a right to exist. The purpose of religious studies was to overcome religion and to shape an atheistic consciousness. To put it plainly, to be involved in religious research was neither prestigious nor did it have any prospects.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the situation in this field of study changed dramatically. Religion and church attained a new status in the society; millions of people turned to religion, and as the need for more scientific knowledge became apparent, scholars as well as the educational system faced the new theoretical tasks. There was a need, first of all, to specify the meaning of the term "Religious Studies". Does it refer to (1) A cluster of sciences that study religion? (2) A critical component of scientific atheism? (3) A value-neutral component of theology (unlike the apologetic part of theology)? (4) An independent humanistic field devoted to the knowledge of religion? There was also a need to define whether the field of religious studies differs from theology, and whether there is a difference between academic and theological research.

In order to answer these questions we have to formulate clearly the object and subject of religious studies. However, Ukrainian scholars of religion still avoid to some extent to answer this central question. There are many different opinions and positions concerning this.<sup>1</sup> From the authors' point of view, the field of Religious Studies is an independent area of scientific knowledge and has its own specific

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<sup>1</sup> G. Aliayev *et al.*, *Lectures on Religious Studies*, Kyiv 1996; V. Vandyshev, *Religious Studies*, Sumy 1996; V. Gubenok, *Religious Studies*, Simferopol 1999; A. Gudyma, *Religious Studies*, Ternopil 2000; V. Dokash and O. Shnurova, *Religious Studies*, Chernivtsy 1998; A. Yeryshev, *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 1999; Y. Kalinin and Y. Kharkovschenko, *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 2001; Y. Kalinin and V. Lubs'kiy, *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 2000; M. Zakovych, ed., *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 2000; M. Rybachuk, ed., *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 1997; V. Lubs'kiy and V. Teremok, eds., *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 2000; S. Bublyk, ed., *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 1999; O. Semianiy *et al.*, *Religious Studies*, Ternopil 1999; V. Taranenko, *Religious Studies*, Kharkov 1999; L. Khodakova, *Religious Studies*, L'viv 2000; A. Cherniy and A. Lakhno, *Religious Studies*, Kyiv 2002. (All these works are in either Russian or Ukrainian.)

object of studies, one which, besides dealing with external human activities, takes into account human religious experience. Ukrainian scholars face another problem, namely, the definition of religion. In our opinion, post-soviet religious studies still use in general Engels' definition of religion, according to which, religion is a fantasized reflection of external powers that oppress people in their everyday life. We still have an archaic definition, from which we are not liberated and a new alternative has not come to the fore.

Seventy years of isolation from religion and scholarship on religion, historical as well as contemporary, have forced us to examine our own religious studies legacy. It was found that in the past there was a school of authoritative religious researchers, who upheld different methodological positions: from the Orthodox Metropolitan Makariy, who created an unsurpassed history of the Orthodox Church, to the positivists M. Dragomanov and O. Potebnya, who laid the foundations of native sociology and politology of religion, as well as linguistic religious studies. Even our atheistic 20<sup>th</sup> century includes many interesting names: S. Tokarev, J. Krivelev, V. Garadzha, M. Gordiyenko, M. Novikov, D. Ugrinovich, M. Shakhnovich, I. Yablokov, A. Yeryshev, B. Lobovik, Y. Duluman and P. Kosuha.

Beside the approaches listed above, our researchers faced other problems, such as the structure of religious studies, the methodology of religious research, as well as specific problems in academic and theological research. While trying to solve these theoretical problems, Ukrainian religious researchers structured religious studies as a well-integrated scholarly and educational subject. The discipline of religious studies includes the following components: the philosophy and phenomenology of religion; the hermeneutical aspects of religion; the history of religion and the philosophy of religious history; the sociology of religion; the psychology of religion; ethnology of religion; geography of religion; language of religion; confessional religious studies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Academic Religious Studies*, Kyiv 2002, 3–10.

Who represents religious studies in Ukraine on the personal and institutional levels? *On the personal level* Ukrainian religious studies are presented by a range of scholars in terms of age, education, worldview orientation and methodological approaches. Traditionally, religious researchers were professional philosophers or historians who specialized in the study of religion. The majority of them were from the older generation: former atheists, who studied in Soviet universities and received their scientific degrees for their atheistic dissertations; their scientific accomplishments were, therefore, connected with their atheistic past. They were not respected amongst scholars in the humanities because they were considered overly apologetic of their ideological system. Among them, however, there were highly qualified specialists who knew ancient languages, religious literature, and had a deep understanding of the philosophy and theology of religion, as well as the history of religion. Some of them had been through a complex worldview transformation and became scholars of religion. Members of the middle generation, who generally had also studied in the philosophical and historical faculties, feel more independent from the atheistic past. Historically, sociologists and psychologists were not at all interested in religion and, until recently, there were no special institutions or faculties for religious studies.

It is only in recent years that religious studies faculties were created at the Tarasa Shevchenko Kyiv National University, at the National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy," and at Chernivtsiy and Prekarpatiy Universities. A new institution was founded, The Donetsk Institute of Artificial Intelligence, where one finds a faculty for training religious researchers. Ukraine has a few departments of Cultural Study and Philosophy, which have established connections to religious studies: Odessa, Lugansk, L'viv, Luts'k, Rivne, Poltava, Sevastopol', Chernigiv, Uzhgorod, Kharkiv, Sumy, Ternopol'. Every year Ukraine graduates about fifty specialists in the field of religious studies. Of course, the level of their education could be higher; but, at last, young professional researchers in religion are now being trained: the future of Ukrainian religious studies depends on their knowledge, skills and orientations. Among secular religious researchers there are many who

are connected to religion; these include historians, linguists, philosophers and archeologists. Some theologians who devote themselves to apologetic theology also consider themselves religious researchers. In present-day Ukraine the general public is also involved in the study of religion. On an amateur level many problems are discussed; on the one hand, this encourages some scientific research, while on the other, it vulgarizes and simplifies the course, goals and consequences of this research.

*On an institutional level*, Ukrainian religious studies are represented by scientific research institutions, educational institutions (secular and religious), research departments of educational institutions and independent research centers. In the former republics of the Soviet Union religious research was traditionally separated from teaching about religion. There was a certain distance between scientific and educational institutions, between researcher and teacher, between those who generated ideas and those who disseminated them. Therefore, as a component of religious atheism, religious research was undertaken at research institutes (there was even an Institute of Scientific Atheism in the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union); on the other hand, the teaching component took place at educational institutions. This strict Soviet paradigm was eventually destroyed; as a consequence, research had to be disseminated, and scholars, without attracting attention, worked as teachers. On the other hand, pedagogy had to have a strong theoretical basis, and therefore teachers strove to engage in research. This they did for a variety of reasons, but mostly in order to obtain academic degrees that would permit them to find work.

The situation has now changed. Religion is studied in denominational religious schools and in secular institutions, such as universities, institutes, colleges, spiritual seminaries and academies. Research on religion is taking place in educational institutions, usually in the sub-faculties of religious studies or philosophy and in the sub-faculties of cultural studies or humanities, as well as in research institutions. At present, researchers can be also teachers. Thus at Kyiv University there is an Institute of Ukrainology. Similarly, along with the Spiritual

Greek-Catholic Academy in L'viv (Catholic University, since 2002), the Institute of History of the Church and the Institute of Society and Religion were created.

The level of development of any science is defined by the existence of professional organizations such as associations, societies, unions, and the like. Such organizations have already been created in Ukraine. Their members include secular scientists as well as theologians, which shows that this system of religious studies is open and capable of self-development. We are referring to the Ukrainian Association of Religious Researchers (UARR), which was created in 1993, based on the Department of Religious Studies, Institute of Philosophy, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (IP NASU), created as a part of the system of the Academy of Sciences in 1991. Since that time, the Association's and the Department's head has been the doctor of philosophical sciences, Professor Anatoly Kolodny. Since 2000, along with the Association, the Center of Religious Information and Freedom has been functioning. In addition, the Association of Young Religious Researchers was created in 2001.

The most distinguished center of scientific research in Ukraine is the Religious Studies Department of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The other ones are the Department of Religious Studies of Kyiv National University, whose Chief Professor is V. Lub-skiy, Kyiv Pedagogical University, whose Chief Professor is M. Zakovych, and Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, whose Chief Professor is V. Gus-sev. There are also some researchers at different universities, i.e., at the Institute of International Relations of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and at the Institute of 6 Strategic Studies. A few years ago, the Institute of Religious Research that was created in L'viv, connected with the Museum of Religion (led by the Candidate of Science A. Bandrivskiy). We can also refer to the following institutions: The Center of Comparative Studies at the Philosophical Faculty of the National Odessa University (Assistant Professor Y. Martynyuk); the Kharkiv New Religious Movements Center (Assistant Professor Y. Kachurov); the Kyiv Center of Humanistic and Religious Studies (Dr. V. Yelenskiy), the Donetsk Religious Stud-

ies Center (Assistant Professor I. Kozlovsky). There are local centers of UARR in Ternopil' (Ternopil Medical Academy; Assistant Professor A. Gudima), L'viv (L'viv Commercial Academy, Professor N. Gorbach), Rivne (Slavic University Professor N. Stokolos), Ostrog (Ostrog Academy, Prorector Professor P. Kralyuk), Chernivtsiy (Chernivtsiy University, Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology, V. Dokash), Poltava (Pedagogical University Rector V. Pashchenko), Sumy, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovs'k, Luts'k, Chernigiv, Khmel'nitskiy, Uzhgorod, Odessa, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Sevastopol', Zaporizhia, Cherkassy.

The Department of the Religious Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine was founded in 1991 based on the Department of Philosophy of Religion that existed within the framework of the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine for many years. The first organized form of the existence of religious studies in Ukraine was created in 1931 in Kharkiv, Anti-religion Sector, as a part of the Institute of Philosophy and Natural Sciences of the All-Ukrainian Association of Institutes for Scientific Studies (AUAISS). Its work was headed by the famous teacher of social sciences D. Ignatuk. Four people were working in this sector: I. Elvin, M. Krivokhatskiy, D. Chernitsov and O. Chefranov. Works of this sector were published in various periodicals, as well as in the form of separate brochures. After the liquidation of the AUAISS, its institutes were given to the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The scientists of the Philosophical Commission of the socioeconomic department of the academy were working in this field. At that time, the development of the knowledge of religion in academic spheres was totally dedicated to the task of spreading anti-religious information and explaining the "opiate of the people" ideologies.

An Institute of Philosophy was restored in the system of the Academy of Sciences 1947. In 1957 a department of scientific atheism appeared within its structure. This department was headed by a famous researcher of religions of the ancient world, Prof. Avetik Avetisian. V. Antonenko, A. Yeryshev, P. Korobko and Y. Okhrimenko were also part of this Department. Although during the next four decades scien-

tific work had to take place within the framework of the implementation of resolutions and directions of the Communist Party about the constant improvement in atheistic education, the workers of the department did some research in religious studies. They did wide-ranging concrete sociological research concerning the Ukrainian population's state of religiosity, besides studies of the history of religion and free thinking. They studied the essence and the structure of religious phenomena; the specific aspects of their social functions and of their interaction with other components of spiritual culture, in particular the domestic and ritual spheres, the arts, science and philosophy, observing the dynamics of religious evolution in conditions of scientific and technical progress. In the 1970's and 1980's, practically for the first time, a complex study of atheism as a spiritual phenomenon was done. This was, in a way, beyond the confines of ideologized apologetics and it opened a real basis for an atheistic world-view. After the creation of the specialized Religious Studies Department on the Philosophical Faculty of Tarasa Shevchenko University, the research of religious activity in Ukraine was revived. This Department was headed by V.K. Tancher for thirty years. After that, similar Departments were opened in other educational institutions in the Ukrainian Republic.

In spite of the apparent ideologizing of religious research during the Soviet period and the early years of the post-Soviet period, some works of Ukrainian scientists are worth to be taken into consideration. Thus the gnoseological essence of religious phenomena was studied by B. Lobovik; its socio-historical characteristics were studied by Y. Duluman and V. Kulik; its social-psychological forms by V. Dolya and V. Pavluk; religions origins by G. Lebedinets; irreligious form of conscience were studied by O. Onischenko, A. Kolodniy, V. Tancher and P. Saukh; the history of theological thought was studied by V. Nychik, Y. Kalinin, L. Konotop, V. Stokyalo, P. Kralyuk and V. Fomichenko. I. Bohachevska, O. Sarapin and R. Trachuk addressed some problems of philosophy of religion in their dissertations. A. Yeryshev, P. Kosuha, M. Zakovich, A. Cherniy and O. Buchma provided a sociological analysis of the religious characteristics of modern believers. In their works, P. Yarotskiy, I. Mozhoviy,

V. Bondarenko, O. Sagan, P. Lobazov, V. Klimov, A. Gudima, O. Nedavnya, P. Pavlenko, N. Stokolos, G. Nadтока, G. Bakanurskiy, V. Lub-skiy, V. Lubaschenko, V. Paschenko and M. Kiriushko covered questions about the history of religion and specifics concerning the functioning of different confessions. The introduction of Christianity to Ukraine became a subject of study for M. Briychevkiy, A. Glushak and P. Kotlar. Modern theological, moral-ethical and eschatological conceptions were analyzed by P. Gopchenko, Y. Tereschenko, V. Schedrin and A. Gudyma. The problems of freedom of conscience and state-church relations were studied by M. Babiy, O. Utkin, M. Rybachuk, P. Panchenko, V. Yelenskiy, O. Ogneva, O. Shuba and V. Suyarko. The works of V. Ulyanivskiy, S. Plohiy, O. Kryzhanivskiy and V. Rychka were devoted to the history of Christian churches. New religious movements in Ukraine as well as mystic groups were studied by L. Filipovych, A. Schedrin and Y. Martynuk.

Currently working in the department of Religious studies of the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine are the doctors of science A. Kolodny, P. Yarotskiy, L. Filipovych, V. Yelenskiy, as well as ten candidates for doctoral degrees: M. Babiy, O. Nedavnya, O. Sagan, O. Buchma, G. Kulagina, P. Pavlenko, S. Zdioruk, V. Klimov and S. Svistunov. Active systematic research of the current problems of sociology, history, ethnology of religion and modern religious processes continues in our country. A Council for the defense of Candidate and Doctoral Dissertations in "Religious Studies" has been created in the department. Around ten to twelve dissertations are being submitted every year. Differing from many Western Institutions, this department receives a budget from the government.

In the course of ten years, scholars of the Department of Religious Studies have carried out research on the following topics: methodological principles and system of religious studies categories; the phenomenon of religion: nature and tendencies; specific characteristics of Ukrainian Christianity; the present-day religious situation in Ukraine: state, tendencies, prognosis; religion as a factor of the ethno-social and political history of Ukraine; new religious movements and cults during



the period of the socio-economical crisis in the post-communist society in Ukraine; freedom of religion in the post-communist countries; transformation of religion and spirituality in the modern and post-modern situation; religious tendencies and development of religiosity in modern Ukrainian society; religion in the context of globalization.

During the last five years the Department published nearly seventy books and brochures, and over 600 individual and collective articles. Beginning in 1996, the Department has regularly issued the quarterly journal *Ukrainian Religious Studies* (26 issues so far), and the annual *Religious Freedom*. Since July 2000, a wide range of readers have taken notice of the monthly magazine *Religious Panorama*. Six out of ten volumes of the *History of Religion of Ukraine* have been published. Other works published include the *Dictionary of Religious Studies* (1996) and the *History of religion in Ukraine* (1999), as well as books and brochures in the series "Thinkers of the Ukrainian Diaspora," "Confessions and churches in Ukraine," "Help for the teachers of religious studies," "Spiritual workers of Ukraine," among others. The *Ukrainian Encyclopedia of Religion* comprising three volumes is being prepared for publication in 2004. It should be added that religious scholars of Ukraine consider the book *Academic Religious Studies* (862 pages) their most valuable accomplishment. It contains the results of their research during the last decade.

In the previous years the Department of Religious Research has undertaken wideranging sociological research on the specific characteristics of the religiosity of modern believers; on the state and tendencies of inter-confessional relationships; on the interplay of religious and national factors in the spiritual revival of Ukraine; and on the character of the neo-religious process. Financial difficulties forced the Department to discontinue this needed scientific research. During the last five years the Department along with the centers of the UARR has organized over fifty scientific religious research conferences, devoted to the anniversary of Christianity; to the problem of the place and role of the religion and the Church in present-day Ukraine; to the history of religion in Ukrainian lands; to the study of freedom of religion in the post-socialist countries.

Currently, the Department of the Religious Studies is the only scientific unit in this specialty. Its task is to carry out fundamental scientific research of religious processes and events; to coordinate religious research in Ukraine; to determine priorities in the topics of research; to organize the training of new scientists; to make a connection with international religious researchers; to organize and hold scientific conferences and seminars. In independent Ukraine, therefore, the process of intense development of the religious studies as a separate field of scientific knowledge is taking place.

The Association of religious research of Ukraine has become a member of several international associations on religious research. Ukrainian religious researchers present their accomplishments at various foreign scientific conferences and in numerous foreign publications. Researchers honored by the Department of religious research IP NASU are Prof. H. Biddulph and C. Durham (USA), I. Muzychka (Italy), S. Fostun (England), St. Yarmus (Canada), I. Shevtsiv (Australia).

Ukrainian religious studies develop not only as one of the humanistic sphere of knowledge, but we can rightfully talk about practical religious studies as well. There are real problems of religious life, which need not only to be thought about, but which also have to be approached from a practical angle. These include: inter-confessional and inter-churches conflicts; attempts to politicize religion and to approach politics from a political angle; attempts to limit the freedom of existence of faiths by dividing them into traditional and non-traditional; the “betrayal” by children of their parents’ religion through accepting new faiths; the spread of missionary activities in Ukraine by different foreign religious centers.

The department of religious studies IP NASU offers to interested organizations the possibility to hold joint research about current religious problems, preparing for them informative, analytical and prognostic materials concerning the religious situation in Ukraine, in particular about the state and future of different confessions; about interconfessional relationships and relationships inside of the confession; about specific aspects of contemporary religiosity; about the spread of non-

traditional religious movements; about the evolution of para-religious and mystical groups.

### *Theology*

As non-theologians, it is quite difficult for us to analyze the state of modern Ukrainian theology. Unlike religious studies, which historically can be perceived as coming from theological and secular interpretation of religion, theology had being existed in Ukraine from ancient times. Ukrainian Christian (Orthodox) theology was known from Kyiv Rus' baptism in 988. Without going into the historical details, we can speak about theology ups and downs. The former includes the works of metropolitan Illarion Kyivskiy (eleventh century), metropolitan Kliment Smolyatych (twelfth century), metropolitan Petro Mohyla (seventeenth century), metropolitans Ivan Ogiyenko and Andrey Sheptytsky (beginning of the twentieth century). Many countries recognized the Ukrainian theological school of thinking as being of a very high standard. For example, the Mohyla Catechism was studied and used by all orthodox churches at that time.

The Synod and the Soviet periods were the difficult times in the history of theology. Theological schools (seminaries and academies) fell into decay or were destroyed. At Soviet time only one seminary existed in Odessa. Therefore, theology in Ukraine now is weak both in an organizational and in an ideological sense. We can see, however, changes to the better in the field of theology in recent times. The number of religious schools has increased, and this is coupled with the rise of religious organizations. According to the statistics of the Ukrainian State Committee for Religious Affairs, there are about 28.000 religious organizations, 120 confessions and movements as of November 2002.<sup>3</sup> In 2001, Ukraine had 147 religious educational institutions that counted 11554 full-time students and 7000 students by correspondence. These students belonged to various churches: Ukrainian Orthodox Church (15/1805+2360); Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kyiv Pa-

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<sup>3</sup> V. Vas'kovsky, "State of religious network in Ukraine," *National Security and Defense* 10 (34), 2002, p. 22.

triarchy (15/1177+404); Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (8/205+80); Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (13/1166+340); Roman Catholic Church (6/322+171); Baptists (42/3849+2078); Pentecostals (13/691+59); Church of the Full Gospel (3/236+560); Adventists (3/180+563); Jewish (5/88); Muslims (5/383+80).

Despite these numbers, Ukraine has some problems with theological education. Because in Ukraine theology has only recently (April 2001) been included in the list of educational subjects for which specialists receive training, the standards of theological education have not been established yet. Therefore, none of the theological institutions have state licensing. Theologians receive either a diploma of "Religious Studies" or "Theology." The latter is not recognized by the state and it should be added that neither the theologians nor the secular researchers are interested in this.

The relationship between religious studies and theology, between secular and nonsecular religious researchers is not simple. This can be explained by historical reasons and by the unclear policy of Ukrainian state in this regard. According to Ukrainian law about freedom of consciousness and religious organizations (1991), the church is separated from the state and the school is separated from the church. Therefore state educational institutions have no right to include the study of any theological subject, and the church cannot open elementary or high schools, which can be recognized, by the state. Such situation creates artificial difficulties in the relations between religious studies and theology.

Nevertheless, former atheists consider that religious studies scholars are playing up to the religions and are giving in to the theologians; they, therefore, dislike and criticize religious studies scholars. On the other hand theologians and confessionally oriented researchers are suspicious that secular researchers of religion are biased, antireligious, and in league with atheists. However, a creative scientific collaboration is gradually developing between religious studies scholars and theologians.

Collaboration between secular and non-secular religious researchers is developing in different directions: (1) organizing and holding con-

ferences; (2) book writing and publishing; (3) realization of various projects; (4) co-teaching in schools and universities.

(1) During the last decade, most scientific conferences have been organized by the Religious Studies Department of the National Academy of Sciences together with different religious organizations. Cooperation with Orthodox, Catholics, Adventists, Muslims, pagans and some new movements has been very fruitful and successful. Anniversaries of the 400<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Orthodox metropolitan Petro Mogila, the 400<sup>th</sup> year of the Berestetsk Union, and 115<sup>th</sup> year of Adventist Church in Ukraine have been celebrated at the all-Ukrainian level. We may refer also to the constant cooperation with Roman Catholics, with whom a conference devoted to the Pope's encyclicals "Faith and Mind" has been organized lately. The conference was timed with John Paul II's visit to Ukraine. Scholars of religious studies did much work to prepare the Pope's visit, including broadcasting on radio and TV. There have been conferences devoted to religious and national minorities, such as Karaites, Jews, Muslims, Old-Believers and pagans.

(2) Regarding writing and publication of books and collections, we can refer to the *Religious Dictionary* (1996), and the *History of Religion of Ukraine* in 10 volumes (1996–2004), as well as to collections of conference addresses and to reports that are the result of team work.

(3) Joint projects include research on the history of the Baptist movement in Ukraine, as well as an International Youth Summer School on "Religious Tolerance" (2001, 2002, and 2003) that involved the participation of young adherents of different religions.

(4) Co-teaching has involved scholars of religious studies teaching at theological schools and theologians teaching at religious studies institutions.

Coming to the end, we would like to mention the fruitful cooperation between the Religious Studies Department of the H. Skovoroda Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences and the Ukrainian Association of Evangelical Baptists. This ten-year cooperation has resulted in some considerable achievements. Among them, we can mention that the Religious Studies Department together with

the Theological Seminary in Odessa have been working for three years (1993–1995) on a scientific research project, “History of Evangelical Baptists of Ukraine.” A great number of unique materials on the history of baptism in Ukraine have been found under the scientific guidance of Dr. Petro Kosucha in the central as well as in regional Ukrainian archives. Some of these documents have led to interpret in a new way a number of facts from the history of this protestant denomination. The conclusions of this research have appeared in the book *History of Evangelical Baptists of Ukraine*. In addition, Sergey Golovaschenko collected documents and published his book *History of Evangelical Baptist Movement in Ukraine*. Y. Reshetnikov used the documents discovered in the archives in his monograph *Ukrainian Baptists and Russian Empire* (1998) and in his candidate thesis “Formation and Differentiation of Evangelical Movement of Ukraine” (2000).

Theologians of Baptist schools closely cooperate with the Religious Studies Department, authoring sections of works devoted to the religious history of Ukraine. Thus, the second part of the “Protestantism” volume of the *History of Religion of Ukraine* was written by Doctor of Theology Sergiy Sannikov and Candidate of Philosophical Sciences Yuri Reshetnikov. Similarly, Y. Reshetnikov devoted to Baptism the second issue of “Religious Panorama” (2001); he also published *Baptism in Ukraine* in the series “Confessions and Churches of Ukraine.” Four of his articles were printed in scientific collections of the Department.

Religious studies scholars welcome the recent activation of theological religious studies in Ukraine. Among the results of this revival we can mention a new Ukrainian translation of the Bible by the Ukrainian Biblical Society. We believe that collaboration between academic religious studies and theology does not lead to the blurring of the scientific approach or to the giving up of secular academic methodology.

As we can see, there are more and more reasons to talk about religious studies and theology in Ukraine as existing fields of knowledge. They strive for selfidentification, often by opposing one another as different forms of knowledge about religion. The opposition “religious studies — atheism” still dominates in such identification. Fol-

lowing the example of the western pattern of the relationships between secular religious studies and theology, attempts to separate them have been made in Ukraine in recent years. But in the distinction between “religious studies” and “theology” what prevails at present is the mode of opposition rather than of collaboration. And it must be said that the more aggressive and irreconcilable camp is that of the theologians.

Post-communist Ukrainian scholarship must reevaluate creatively the achievements of international scholarship; it should also strive to create its own principles and understanding of its research subject; it must create its appropriate working categories. The first steps of religious studies and theology in Ukraine are almost unknown to Western countries, even to neighboring countries such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Russia, Byelorussia, Bulgaria and the Baltic countries. What we need, therefore, is a more assured self-determination of Ukrainian religious researchers, secular and non-secular; we also need wide-ranging contact with foreign specialists in the sphere of study about religion; translations of the work of Ukrainian scholars into English and other languages; inclusion in the Ukrainian academic space of works of non-Ukrainian religious researchers; professional discussion among colleagues in religious research.

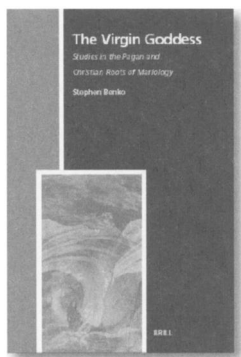
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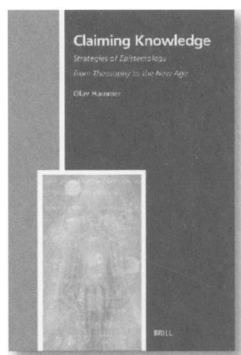
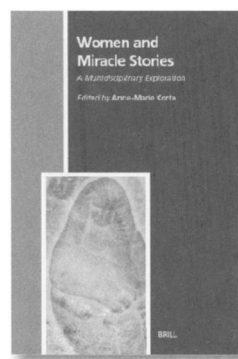
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# A RECONSIDERATION OF THE APHRODITE-ASHTART SYNCRETISM

STEPHANIE L. BUDIN

## *Summary*

Scholars have long recognized a one-to-one correspondence, or *interpretatio* syncretism, between the Greek goddess Aphrodite and the Phoenician goddess Ashtart (Astarte). The origin of this syncretism is usually attributed to the eastern origins of Aphrodite herself, whereby the Greek goddess evolved out of the Phoenician, as is suggested as early as the writings of Herodotos. In contrast to this understanding, I argue here that the perceived syncretism actually emerged differently on the island of Cyprus than throughout the rest of the Mediterranean. On Cyprus, the syncretism emerged out of an identification between the two queen goddesses of Cyprus — Aphrodite and Ashtart. In Greece, by contrast, it evolved out of a slow “Orientalizing” of Aphrodite combined with a Greek tendency to equate almost all eastern goddesses. As a result, the identification between Aphrodite and Ashtart was quite general, and both goddesses were syncretized not only with each other, but with a full range of Mediterranean goddesses.

This essay is an inquiry into the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism. Specifically, what was the nature of this syncretism, when did it first come into being, and under what circumstances? Such questions have a long history in Classical studies, especially as interest in Near Eastern influences on Greek culture has grown in the past century. However, I believe that this inquiry has long been hampered by one basic misconception concerning the early relationship between these two goddesses: that Aphrodite evolved, to one extent or another, out of Levantine Ashtart. Based on this hypothesis, it is inevitable that one would assume that the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism dates back to the origins of Aphrodite herself, and that the syncretism as the ancient Greeks saw it was merely the result of historical fact.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it

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<sup>1</sup> Both Herodotos and Pausanias claimed that the cult of Aphrodite Ourania came from the east, Ashkalon on the part of Herodotos (1.103), Assyria on the

is also generally assumed that the syncretism between these goddesses was bi-directional. That is, just as the Greeks recognized Aphrodite in Ashtart, so too did the Phoenicians recognize Ashtart in Aphrodite. This equation was somewhat confused by the tendency of identifying Ashtart in the west not with Aphrodite but with Uni-Juno (see below: Pyrgi), leading to a slight revision of the earlier belief: in the east Ashtart was identified with Aphrodite, but in the west with Hera, except for the sanctuary at Sicilian Eryx, where the Ashtart-Aphrodite syncretism was maintained.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to this understanding, I suggest that the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism took place differently on Cyprus than throughout the rest of the Mediterranean, and that the natures of these syncretisms were quite different. The limited number of goddesses on the island of Cyprus led to the two most prominent — Aphrodite and Ashtart — being seen as one and the same. By contrast, in the rest of the Mediterranean, there was a far more general syncretism between Aphrodite and a whole family of Near Eastern goddesses, and a similarly general syncretism between Ashtart and various Mediterranean and Near Eastern goddesses. Aphrodite was not simply a Greek Ashtart, but the western equivalent of Ashtart, Atargatis, Anaitis, Ishtar/Mylitta, and even Isis and al-‘Uzza. For her own part, Ashtart was not merely Aphrodite, but Isis, Uni, and even the Mistress of Byblos/Hathor. Thus, outside

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part of Pausanias (1.14.7). In the modern scholarship, Ashtart is understood to be a possible, if not the most likely, eastern cognate of the Greek goddess of sex, and scholars from Farnell to Burkert have suggested that Ashtart-Ishtar lies behind the origins of Aphrodite (Farnell 1896:618; Burkert 1985:152–53). Other scholars, such as Pirenne-Delforge and Bonnet, have suggested that while Ashtart may not be a direct progenitress of the Greek goddess of sex, it was probably inspiration from the Canaanite/Phoenician goddess which caused either a Cypriot goddess or a Cyprominoan goddess finally to evolve into Aphrodite, deriving some of her persona from her eastern sister (Bonnet and Pirenne-Delforge 1999:272–73). In either event, one long-standing belief is that the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism goes back to the origins of Aphrodite herself, and thus the syncretism must date back at least into the early Archaic Age, if not the Bronze Age.

<sup>2</sup> Bonnet 1996:116.



of Cyprus, the relationship between Aphrodite and Ashtart is far less exclusive than traditionally assumed, and the rise of both perceived syncretisms must be studied and understood separately.

*What is "Syncretism"?*

As the reader has no doubt already surmised, I do not use the word in its earliest and purest sense: a union of Cretans. However, the word has come to have a range of meanings in the past two centuries, ranging from a general notion of "relationship" to an equation of deities equivalent to henotheism. The various nuances or subdivisions of the notion of syncretism were established by P. Lévêque in his 1975 article "Essai de typologie des syncrétismes," and reconsidered by A. Motte and V. Pirenne-Delforge in their 1994 article "Du 'bon usage' de la notion de syncrétisme." In this latter work "syncretism" is separated out from the related notions of "influence" and "borrowing." Then, in proper Platonic fashion, it is studied in its various manifestations. *Interpretatio*, for example, is "cette habitude . . . de baptiser les divinités étrangères du nom de leurs propres divinités,"<sup>3</sup> thus, a type of parallelism where, say, Aphrodite = Ashtart. The "amalgam" type of syncretism, by contrast, is a mixture of two or more deities, possibly from different pantheons, creating a new entity.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Ashtart + Anat + Asherah = Atargatis.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, the "syncrétisme-hénothéisme" (henotheism) indicates that several deities of the same gender in one or more pantheons are seen as being the same god or goddess.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Aphrodite = Astart = Isis = Hera = Hathor.

P. Pakkanen, in her 1996 work *Interpreting Early Hellenistic Religion*, took the study of syncretism a step farther, arguing that syncretism is in fact a process, rather than merely a state of being. Thus, the various terms as defined above are actually steps within the overarching process of syncretism. Here, local societies with their own,

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<sup>3</sup> Motte and Pirenne-Delforge 1994:21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Oden 1977:107.

<sup>6</sup> Motte and Pirenne-Delforge 1994:20.

particular pantheons and cults come into contact with new peoples and new religious ideologies and deities. First, an *interpretatio*, or parallelism, process takes place, whereby one group (or both) identifies one or more of the “foreign” deities with members of their own pantheon. Long-term parallelism may eventually cause amalgamation to occur, so that a new deity, or a new conception of the old deities, comes into existence. This may either occur naturally, as the iconographic merging of Demeter and Isis in the Hellenistic period, or artificially, as the creation of Helleno-Egyptian Serapis from a combination of Osiris, Apis, and Greek imagination. With this new deity in place, the process may then repeat.<sup>7</sup>

While Pakkanen’s description of the amalgam aspect of syncretism is typical of the Hellenistic period, it is actually the *interpretatio* aspect of the process that is of greatest relevance in the study of Greek religious syncretism generally. This is due to the Greeks’ own understanding of the universalism of their pantheon. That is to say, the Greeks believed that all peoples worshipped the same deities, although obviously with different names and different customs. Thus Rudhardt, “Quels que soient les usages propres à chaque peuple, tous les peuples . . . s’adresser à de mêmes dieux.”<sup>8</sup> As such, as the Greeks came into contact with different cultures, rather than recognizing the individual characters and identities of the “foreign” deities, the Greeks equated them (*interpretatio*) with their own gods. Such a Greek universalism is already suggested in the works of Homer, where groups as disparate as the Danaans, Trojans, and even Phaiakians all worshipped the same deities by the same names. Branching out farther by the time of Herodotos, the Greeks learned new names for their universal deities, Amon for Zeus, for example, but the idea of universal identity remained. Even when “new” cults were imported, Rudhardt argues that the Greeks understood this not as the importation of a new

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<sup>7</sup> Pakkanen 1996:87–88, 92.

<sup>8</sup> Rudhardt 1992:224.

deity, but as a new style of ritual/cult for a long-established deity.<sup>9</sup> As such, *interpretatio* was inevitable in Greek religion.

The types of syncretisms which typified the ancient Near Eastern religions expand upon the framework established above. Once again, in the Near East, *interpretatio* is a common form of syncretism, with a full range of depths of participation. A rather typical example is expressed in text RS 20.24 from Ugarit.<sup>10</sup> This is a bilingual list of deities, giving the Mesopotamian/Akkadian names of deities and their Ugaritic equivalents. In some instances, the names are identical, such as <sup>d</sup>*a-na-tum* = 'nt (Anat) or <sup>d</sup>*aš-ra-tum* = *ašrt* (Asherah/Athirat). In other cases, however, a clear *interpretatio* is present, as with the lunar gods <sup>d</sup>*sîn* = *yrh*, or the sea deities <sup>d</sup>*tâmtum* (female) = *ym* (male).<sup>11</sup>

Different deities, even from different pantheons, could be so closely equated that whether one deity or two was understood could be ambiguous. So much is clear for the goddesses Ishtar, Ishhara, and Shaushka. Concerning the former two, in some cases the two goddesses could be clearly distinguished from one another, as in an old Akkadian love spell invoking both Inanna/Ishtar and Ishhara.<sup>12</sup> In others, such as a wedding feast in *Atrahasis*, revelers "shall call Ishtar 'Ishhara'," indicating a merging of identities.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the iconographic program at Yazilikaya in modern Turkey portrays the Hurrian goddess Shaushka as an armed deity appearing both among the male gods and the female goddesses. Such androgyny, as well as the motif of the armed goddess, typically belongs to Ishtar. Furthermore, one of the ideograms for the name Ishtar, <sup>d</sup>IŠTAR = DINGIR *eš<sub>4</sub>-dar*, used to designate this goddess in early Syria, came to be used to express the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 226–27. For a further example, see below, on the Cypriot vs. Greek cult of Aphrodite at Athens.

<sup>10</sup> Schaeffer 1939:24, 42–64.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Prechel 1996:24.

<sup>13</sup> Dalley 1989:18.

names of Ishhara<sup>14</sup> and Shaushka<sup>15</sup> as well, often making it difficult to tell which specific goddess was under discussion.

Unlike in Greek religion, the universal nature of deities was not as pronounced in the Near East, a fact evident in the Near Eastern practice of adopting foreign deities. Thus the adoption of the Levantine deities Anat, Ashtart, and Reshef into the Egyptian pantheon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties (after the Hyksôs interlude).<sup>16</sup> The Semitic names and warrior characteristics of each deity were preserved, while they adopted more Egyptianizing iconographies. However, in a further example of syncretic tendencies, either influence from the Levant generally, or specifically from the adoption of Anat and Ashtart, the Egyptians devised a new goddess for themselves: Qudshu/Qedeshat. The name contains the Semitic radicals for “holiness,” and the goddess’s Nude Goddess iconography (see below) is distinctively Levantine. However, in spite of repeated attempts, no clear cognate for the goddess can be found in the Canaanite pantheons, and it appears that she emerged out of an amalgam of Ashtart and Anat in Egypt, thus becoming her own goddess. So much follows the steps outlined by Pakkanen above, with an adoption element instead of the *interpretatio* phase leading to an amalgam-type syncretism and a new deity.

A further type of syncretism — what I choose to call “eclipse” — occurred in the Near East when one deity consumed, ousted, or otherwise eclipsed the identity of another. This is evident in the relationship between El and Yahweh in Iron Age Israel, where, during the period of the Judges, according to M.S. Smith, Yahweh, originally a minor warrior deity, adopted the attributes of El, then god of Israel. Eventually, the transmission of attributes was so complete that Yahweh eclipsed El, whose name became nothing more than a generic term for “god.”<sup>17</sup> This syncretism might be seen in contrast to Yahweh’s early relationship with Baal, another early deity in the Israelite pantheon. In

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<sup>14</sup> Prechel 1996:41–44.

<sup>15</sup> Wegner 1981:22.

<sup>16</sup> Leclant 1960:3.

<sup>17</sup> Smith 2002: Chapter 1.2.

this instance, no such eclipse-syncretism occurred, leading to conflicts between the gods in the literary record.<sup>18</sup> This eclipse variety of syncretism also appears in Greek religious history, especially in the case of some hero/heroine cults. Here, a more dominant deity, such as Apollo or Artemis, could replace the cult of a more local deity, such as Hyakinthos or Iphigeneia respectively. The divinity of the hero/heroine is taken by the god/dess, leaving a cult of a semi-divinized human in its stead.

The notion of syncretism, then, has a rich variety of meanings. At its simplest level, there is the *interpretatio* syncretism, whereby two or more deities are seen as the same. The degree of initial distance and the degree of identification can vary, with the example of Ishtar and Ishhara being an extreme example. Usually, though, such parallelism emerges between deities of different pantheons. If the merging of identities is sufficient to create a new deity, amalgam is said to take place. In this instance, it is possible for one or more of the original, pre-amalgamated deities to continue in existence and cult beside the new deity. If, on the other hand, the merging of identities causes one of the “creator” deities to cease to exist, then we might say that an “eclipse” type of syncretism has occurred. When there is no limit on *interpretatio* syncretisms within a cosmopolitan social system, henotheism begins to emerge. Here, an ever-growing and complex system of parallelisms can lead to the notion that, in fact, ALL gods are one, or all goddesses. Likewise, when eclipse syncretism runs rampant, monotheism emerges. Both such tendencies are late and rare, though.

In the present work, it is the nature of *interpretatio* that comes under closest scrutiny as it is involved in the relationship(s) between Aphrodite and Ashtart. A strict, one-to-one equation between the two goddesses, whereby the Greeks believed Ashtart to be just another name for Aphrodite, and *vice versa* for the Phoenicians (Aphrodite = Ashtart), really only existed on Cyprus, where the Paphian probably did have more in common with her Phoenician counterpart than her Greek manifestation. In the rest of the Mediterranean, however, a more

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

extensive, yet less consistent, type of *interpretatio* took place, whereby Aphrodite and Ashtart not only came to be equated with each other, but with several other deities in the Greek and Near Eastern repertoires. One could even argue that the extent to which the Greeks identified Near Eastern goddesses almost universally as Aphrodite indicates a limited type of henotheism, a henotheism which would reach its apex in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Empires.

*A Very Few Words on the Institution of Sacred Prostitution and on Nude Goddess Iconography*

In almost all studies of Ashtart and Aphrodite, either in their relation to each other or otherwise, the matter of sacred prostitution arises. That this institution supposedly existed in both of these goddesses' cults is commonly held up as one of the clearest bits of evidence that their cults, and the goddesses themselves, must be closely related, as otherwise how could such a unique religious practice spring up independently in two cults so closely related in time and place?

Recent research on the institution of sacred prostitution, however, shows that this practice did not exist at all in the ancient Mediterranean or Near East.<sup>19</sup> The concept of selling sex for the profit of a deity was invented by Herodotos in Book 1.199 of his *Histories* (see below). This passage is in the midst of several fanciful descriptions of Babylonian culture, none of which (except, oddly, for passage 199) are recognized as even remotely accurate vis-à-vis ancient Mesopotamia. The institution does not appear again in the Classical corpus until Strabo's *Geography*, where the historian not only records the practice in Babylon almost verbatim to Herodotos' description, but finds this practice carried out throughout the regions recently conquered by Rome. There are no Hellenistic references to sacred prostitution, when the Greeks lived in closest proximity to their eastern neighbors. All references to sacred prostitution save that by Herodotos come after Strabo, none of which are supported by local sources. Thus it appears that Strabo, like Herodotos, made up his references, in this case as Roman propaganda,

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<sup>19</sup> Budin, Forthcoming: *passim*, with full bibliography.

showing how degenerate the Babylonians, Egyptians, Corinthians, etc. were before being morally “saved” by Rome. Later authors and scholars, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century Athenaios, believing Strabo’s propaganda, inserted references to sacred prostitution into their analyses of earlier literature, as Athenaios did with a poem of Pindar (frag. 122). In the Near Eastern corpora, the names of female cult positions were translated as “sacred prostitute” based on the preconceived notion, coming from the Classical authors, that there were supposed to be sacred prostitutes in the Near East. Since 1985 and the writings of Stephen Hooks, however, it has become apparent that none of this terminology might be so translated. As such, sacred prostitution is a myth. As a myth, it cannot serve as evidence for the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism.

Another common consideration in the study of Aphrodite and Ashtart is the presence of Nude Goddess plaques, often called “Astarte Plaques,” in both Phoenicia and Greece. These plaques are distinctive in their iconography, showing a nude female, *en face*, legs together, with arms that either hold the breasts, point to the genitalia, or lie straight to the sides. Such images from Phoenicia are typically understood to be portrayals of Ashtart, while those from the Greek world are often interpreted as Aphrodite.<sup>20</sup> As such, they appear to be a physical, iconographic link between Aphrodite and Ashtart and an important consideration in the study of their syncretism.

However, as I have discussed elsewhere, I do not believe it is accurate to see the Nude Goddess in Greece as a depiction of Aphrodite. Such Nude Goddess images (in metal, ivory, and terra cotta) are most popular in the 8<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries, a time when goddesses were not portrayed in the nude in Greek iconography (a trend which does not begin until the 4<sup>th</sup>-century Knidian Aphrodite). Furthermore, the contexts in which these images were discovered, graves and the sanctuaries of several different gods and goddesses, does not suggest a portrayal of any

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<sup>20</sup> Albright 1939: *passim*; Ammerman 1991: *passim*. Alternate theories have also been put forth concerning the identification of these images. See especially Winter 1983, Keel and Uehlinger 1998, and Böhm 1990 for Near East and Greece, respectively.

specific Greek goddess, Aphrodite or otherwise.<sup>21</sup> As the Greek Nude Goddess cannot be shown to be Aphrodite, there is no reason to consider this iconography or its transmission in the current study.

*A Very Quick History of the Origins and Personae of Ashtart and Aphrodite*

Who are these two goddesses whose identities were so tightly wound in ancient and modern literature? Were they, in fact, related, and what were their commonalities?

Ashtart: Origins

It is generally accepted that Ashtart emerged out of an amalgam-type syncretism between the Sumerian goddess Inanna and the Semitic god Athtar — both, among other things, Venus deities.<sup>22</sup> When the early Semites came into contact with the Sumerians in Mesopotamia, they “adjusted” some of their deities to have them align with the Sumerian pantheon. The Semitic female solar goddess Shapash became the masculine Shamash.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, the male Venus god became the gender-ambiguous but essentially female Ishtar (who occasionally sports a beard).<sup>24</sup> As this new goddess, feminine in persona but masculine in name (“Ishtar” lacks the feminizing “t” found in the regional Semitic dialects) traveled westwards into the territories inhabited by Athtar-worshippers, some apparent confusion emerged concerning her relationship with the long-established male Venus deity. Ishtar/Eshtar/Ashtar could be seen as simultaneously male and female, as is evident on three 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium inscriptions from two temples in Mari, a city located on the upper Euphrates and a natural melting

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<sup>21</sup> “The Problem of Female Nudity in Aegean Iconography — or — How not to Find Aphrodite in the Archaeological Record,” delivered at the *Damaged Bodies* Conference at the SOAS, University of London, November 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Here, as in all instances, ethnic titles refer to speakers of a specific language. Sumerians are speakers of the Sumerian language; Semites are speakers of Semitic languages, such as Akkadian and Ugaritic.

<sup>23</sup> Archi 1995:135.

<sup>24</sup> Heimpel 1982; Selz 2000:32–33.



pot between Mesopotamian and west Semitic cultures. The first comes from the so-called Ishtar temple discovered in 1934. Here, one of three similar dedications read:

<i>Lam-gi<sub>4</sub>-Ma-eri</i>	Lamgi-Mari
LUGAL <i>Ma-eri</i>	King of Mari
ENSÍ.GAL	great governor
<sup>d</sup> EN.LÍL	of Enlil
ALAM- <i>su</i>	his statue
<i>a-na</i>	to
<sup>d</sup> MÜŠ.UŠ	male Inanna
A.MU.RU	dedicated. <sup>25</sup>

The MÜŠ logogram in the second to last line of the inscription is read as the name Inanna, while the UŠ sign is a masculine element.<sup>26</sup>

As such, confusing as it may be, it appears that the deity of the temple complex is some manner of “male” Inanna, as all three inscribed votives are dedicated to this same deity.

Other inscriptions come from the temple complex to the south of the so-called “Massif Rouge.” Here were found small, inscribed statues representing dedicators, as well as an inscribed vase.<sup>27</sup> The two divine names to whom these items were dedicated are MÜŠ.ZA.ZA and the more phonetically construed (*G*)iš-*dar-ra-at*.<sup>28</sup> Thus a votive from the royal intendant reads:

.....	.....
PA. É	Intendant of the “house”
GAL. LÚ	of the king
<i>In-ha-da</i> <sup>ki</sup>	of Inhada
DUL- <i>su</i>	his statue
<sup>d</sup> MÜŠ.ZA.ZA	to female Inanna
TUG.SAG.DU	he dedicated. <sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Thureau-Dangin 1934:140, #174.

<sup>26</sup> Lambert 1985:537.

<sup>27</sup> Parrot *et al.* 1967.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., and Lambert 1985:537. “ZA.ZA” means “female,” as “UŠ” means “male.”

<sup>29</sup> Parrot *et al.* 1967:316, #9 (M 2268 + 2283 + 2413).

By contrast the dedication of Suwada reads:

<i>I-ku-<sup>d</sup>Ša-ma-gan</i>	Iku-Shamagan
LUGAL <i>Ma-ri<sup>ki</sup></i>	King of Mari
<i>Su-wa-d[a]</i>	Suwada
QA.ŠU.DU <sub>8</sub>	the singer (?)
DUMU.NITA	son heir
<i>Be-bu-BAD</i>	of Bebu-BAD
RAŠ.GA	the great merchant
<sup>d</sup> ÍD	of the river
<sup>d</sup> (G)eš-dar-ra-at	to Eshdarat
SAG.TUG	dedicated. <sup>30</sup>

In some cases it seems that the two names <sup>d</sup>MÜŠ.ZA.ZA and <sup>d</sup>(G)eš-dar-ra-at were either combined or confused. On an inscription from Dubla the dedication is made to <sup>d</sup>MÜŠ.GIŠ.TIR, while a man identified as “the son of Wananni” dedicated his statue to <sup>d</sup>NIN-darat.<sup>31</sup> It would appear, then, that rather than two separate goddesses, the names MÜŠ.ZA.ZA and *E/Ishdarat* refer to the same deity, one in Sumerian or ideographic form, the other in syllabic form. The ideogram MÜŠ is, once again, taken as an ideogram for the name Inanna, and thus what we have at the temple by the Massif Rouge is a cult place of the goddess known either as Eshdarat or as “female” Inanna. This is the earliest instance of the goddess name Ashtar(a)t, and as well the earliest association of this name with the Mesopotamian goddess Inanna/Ištar.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 329, M 2241.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 319–20; M 2278 and M 2447 respectively.

<sup>32</sup> Bonnet, in her monograph on Ashtart (1996) argues that the earliest attestation of the goddess’s name appears in 3<sup>rd</sup>-millennium Ebla, where the name āš-dar is given as the equivalent of <sup>d</sup>Inanna (Bonnet 1996:136–37). However, this form of the name lacks the feminizing ‘t’ which specifically distinguishes feminine Ashtart from her male companion and progenitor Athtar, as well as from her eastern cognate Ishtar. The Eblaic name is clearly feminine, being seen as the equivalent of Inanna, but the orthography does not yet distinguish between Ashdar/Ishtar and Ashtart *per se*. As

It is possible that these deities were understood as the Marian equivalents of Athtar and Ashtart, with MÙŠ.UŠ being Athtar, the male Venus deity familiar to the Semitic peoples inhabiting Mari, while MÙŠ.ZA.ZA/Eshdarat might be understood as Ishtar/Ashtart, the newer, Mesopotamian, female version of this god, who eventually ousted her male counterpart from the pantheon.<sup>33</sup> An alternate opinion, offered by Gawlikowska, suggests that rather than a male and female pair of deities, the Marians worshipped one goddess under her male and female names, with the MÙŠ.UŠ not necessarily referring to the sex of the deity, but rather the gender of her name. Thus MÙŠ.UŠ would be Ishtar (grammatically masculine) while MÙŠ.ZA.ZA is Ashdarat/Ashtart, a feminine name.<sup>34</sup>

#### Ashtart: Persona

By the time Ashtart's cult arrived on the Mediterranean coast, specifically in the texts from Ugarit, the goddess was clearly feminine, distinct from her fellow deity Athtar, but still understood to be a western "equivalent" of Ishtar — the RS 20.24 document mentioned above lists *d<sup>i</sup>štar<sup>iš-tar</sup>* = [<sup>ʾ</sup>]*ttrt*; Ishtar equals Ashtart.<sup>35</sup> Like her progenitress, Ashtart maintained a belligerent persona in the Ugaritic literature, appearing in the myths as a huntress (*Athtart the Huntress*) and a supporter of the storm god Baal (*Baal Cycle*). Possibly through contact with the maiden warrior goddess Anat, however, Ashtart lost almost all of Ishtar's erotic components. While a beautiful goddess (*The Epic of Kirta*), and possibly a love interest for Baal (*Athtart the Huntress*), she nevertheless does not manifest or revel in her own sexuality, as do both Ishtar and Sumerian Inanna. From a Greek perspective, Ashtart is more like Athena or Artemis than Aphrodite.<sup>36</sup>

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such, I am inclined to see the Marian material as a more definitive representation of this goddess's name.

<sup>33</sup> Lambert 1985:537. See also Bordreuil 1985:547.

<sup>34</sup> Gawlikowska 1980:28.

<sup>35</sup> Schaeffer 1939:45.

<sup>36</sup> Budin 2003:225–28 for full references and texts.

The evidence is slight concerning Ashtart in the Iron Age, as the Phoenicians tended to write on perishable materials. Nevertheless, 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century funerary inscriptions from the royal family of Sidon (KAI 13 and 14) and a 7<sup>th</sup> century peace treaty signed between King Esarhaddon of Assyria and King Ba'al of Tyre show that Ashtart's priest(ess)hood ran in the royal family, and that the goddess, as in the Bronze Age, continued to wield power in battle. In KAI 14, the young King Eshmanezzer claims that his mother Am'Ashtart was priestess of that goddess, and that his family dedicated not one, but two separate temples to Ashtart over the course of one generation.<sup>37</sup> In the peace treaty, concluded in 670, the transgressor is cursed, "May Ashtart break your bow in the thick of battle and have you crouch at the feet of your enemy."<sup>38</sup> Other deities, specifically Baal, Melqart, and Eshmun, are invoked to raise hostile winds against the forces, and to despoil the people of their property. That only Ashtart is invoked in matters of battle highlights the power this goddess continued to have over warfare in the Phoenician period.<sup>39</sup>

A late, and technically "foreign," document supports one more important aspect of Ashtart's persona. According to Philo of Byblos, as preserved in the works of Eusebios of Caesarea, Ashtart received the queenship of all of Phoenicia from the creator deity Kronos-El, a queenship she shared with the king deity Zeus Demarous-Adodos. Just as the above-mentioned Phoenician funerary documents revealed Ashtart to be the patroness of the royal family, the myth recounted by Philo emphasized the role of Ashtart as Queen and consort in Phoenician religion.<sup>40</sup> This role is emphasized in a 4<sup>th</sup> century inscription from Kition, where Ashtart is specifically dubbed the "Holy Queen" (*mlkt qdšt*).<sup>41</sup> As we shall see, this aspect of her character remains dominant throughout the 1<sup>st</sup>-millennium Mediterranean.

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<sup>37</sup> Peckham 1987:83–84.

<sup>38</sup> Parpola and Watanabe 1988:27.

<sup>39</sup> Budin 2003:245–50 for full references and texts.

<sup>40</sup> Bonnet and Pirenne-Delforge 1999:257.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 267.

### Aphrodite: Origins<sup>42</sup>

There are two main hypotheses concerning the origins of Aphrodite. One claims that she is an Indo-European Dawn Goddess, thus related to Greek Eos and Indic Ushas.<sup>43</sup> More probable is the hypothesis that Aphrodite evolved on Cyprus in the Late Bronze Age through a mixing of indigenous Cypriot and Levantine influences, physically manifest in the Bird faced figurines of the Late Cypriot II period.<sup>44</sup> The goddesses most likely to have contributed Levantine elements were Ishtar and Ishhara, who were represented in Syria by almost identical iconography. The Cypriot goddess and her possible consort — the nameless, horned god of Enkomi — came to be worshipped throughout Cyprus, the goddess venerated especially at Paphos to judge from the archaeological remains of the sanctuary there (see below: Paphos). When the Mycenaean Greeks settled at Maa-Palakastro and Paphos in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, they came into contact with this Paphian goddess and eventually adopted her. During the Dark Age, contacts between Cyprus and Crete specifically introduced this new goddess to the Aegean Greeks, who adopted her as their own goddess of sex. At some point during this evolution, the name “Aphrodite” emerged to represent the goddess, although, to date, the name has defied all attempts at etymology.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For a full treatment of this topic, see Budin 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Boedeker 1974: *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> Budin 2003: Chapter 10.

<sup>45</sup> Although see West 2000 for a competent consideration of possible Semitic roots. As Pirenne-Delforge notes, the name “Aphrodite” only appears once in the Syllabo-Cypriot corpus, suggesting that the goddesses was not as well-known by that name in Cyprus as she was in the Aegean (Bonnet and Pirenne-Delforge 1999:260). This may indicate that the name evolved later than the goddess herself, possibly through a combination of Hellenic and Semitic elements. However, I am of the opinion that no full consideration of the goddess’s name might be undertaken until more is known of Eteocypriot, the “missing link” for Aphrodite’s name.

## Aphrodite: Persona

Aphrodite is first and foremost a goddess of sex and love. According to Hesiod (*Theogony*, 203–6), “this honor she has from the beginning, having received this/ portion among men and immortal deities:/ maidens’ fond discourse and smiles and deceits/ and joy and sweet love and gentleness.” As the author of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* describes her in Hymn V, she is “golden-throned Aphrodite, of Cyprus, who in deities stirs up sweet desire and who subdues the race of mortal men.” And the 7<sup>th</sup>-century poet Mimnermos supposedly spoke for many when he asked (frag. 1.1–3):

What life, what joy without golden Aphrodite?  
I should die, were these things not a care to me,  
Secret love and sweet gifts and the bed.

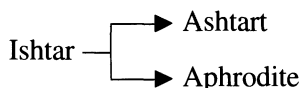
Aphrodite’s dominion over love and sex are distinct from issues of fertility and maternity, in which categories Aphrodite plays minimal roles. Far more important are her associations with sea and sky, especially as Aphrodite Euploia and Aphrodite Ourania; the island of Cyprus; and, in the early period, even militarism (evident in her early armed *xoana* and her relationship with Ares). This last element faded quickly from her Greek persona, such that, in Book V of the *Iliad*, the goddess is ridiculed for attempting to face Hera and Athena in battle, while Roman school boys were asked why on earth the statue of Spartan Aphrodite was armed.<sup>46</sup>

From these data it becomes clear that Ashtart and Aphrodite are, in fact, related, although not in quite the manner usually assumed in modern scholarship. The common belief is that Aphrodite emerged out of Ashtart, thus Ishtar→Ashtart→Aphrodite. In this way, Ashtart and Aphrodite were always closely linked, as the one is virtually the daughter of the other. In contrast to this, I argue that, while both Ashtart and Aphrodite did evolve from Ishtar, this was a parallel development (although not synchronic); both goddesses evolved separately, developing

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<sup>46</sup> Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* 2.4.26.

their own, distinct personae along the way. Thus:



Ashtart clearly maintained the belligerent aspects of Ishtar, while Aphrodite, possibly having more militaristic qualities in Cyprus and very early Greece, maintained the more erotic aspects of the Mesopotamian goddess. In the end, Ashtart and Aphrodite had very little in common, which ultimately forces us to ask how the ancient Greeks came to associate these goddesses.

A large part of the answer, no doubt, is the common relationship these two goddesses had with Cyprus. In spite of their differences, both Paphian Aphrodite and Ashtart were queen goddesses of the island: the “Paphian” reigning over Greek and Cypriot populations, Ashtart over the Phoenicians. These two cults seem to have hit head-on at the essentially Eteocypriot site of Amathus, where the full equation of Aphrodite=Paphia=Ashtart took place.<sup>47</sup> In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE there were dedications to the Paphian Ashtart, indicating the culmination of syncretism between these two goddesses on the island.<sup>48</sup> Thus, in the consideration of the history of the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism, the next order of business is to consider Cyprus.

### *Aphrodite and Ashtart as Queens of Cyprus*

#### *Aphrodite at Paphos*

The remains of the sanctuary at Paphos reveal that it served as a religious site and metal foundry (probably related) since at least the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although many of the architectural remains were obliterated by construction of a later Roman sanctuary and Medieval sugar factory, what remains shows that the sanctuary had a typical Late Bronze Age Cypriot lay-out, including the presence of the bronze smithy.<sup>49</sup> There is no direct evidence to show what deity

<sup>47</sup> Budin 2003:267.

<sup>48</sup> Bonnet 1996:160; E 14, line 3: ]’ŠTRT PP[.

<sup>49</sup> Budin 2003:171, 174.

or deities was/were worshipped at this LBA sanctuary. Nevertheless, the presence of a Late Cypriot II Normal faced figurine does suggest that Paphos was home to the cult of a goddess, as does all the later literature which strongly associated the cult at Paphos with Aphrodite (see below).

Mycenaean refugees first settled on Cyprus around 1190 at the site of Maa-Palaikastro, near Paphos. Within one generation they had moved into Paphos itself, mingled with the local Eteocypriot population, and, apparently, adopted the cult of the Paphian goddess. From the early 12<sup>th</sup> century down to c. 900 BCE, the population remained constant at Paphos, the site being relatively unaffected by the tribulations at the end of the Bronze Age. Contacts between Cyprus and Crete are particularly strong during this period, with the export of Cypriot artistic motifs to Crete reaching an apex in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup> It is also during this period that the earliest archaeological evidence for the cult of Aphrodite appears on Crete at the site of Kato Symi Viannou, where her joint cult with Hermes remains constant well into the Common Era. It is highly probably, then, that the Cypriots “exported” the cult of the Paphian during this period of the Dark Age, a cult translated by the Cretens and Greeks as that of Aphrodite.

By the period of the earliest Greek literature, Aphrodite is well-connected with Paphos, it being recognized as her principle sanctuary. Thus Homer related (*Odyssey*, 8.362–66):

Then smile-loving Aphrodite went to Cyprus  
To Paphos, where are her temenos and altar of sacrifice;  
The Charities bathed and anointed her with ambrosial oil  
Which adorns the ever-living gods;  
About her they draped a garment, a wonder to behold.

While one of the later Homeridai mentioned how Aphrodite (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 5.58–59):

Going to Cyprus she entered the sweet-smelling temple  
in Paphos, where are her temenos and fragrant altar.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 191.



Aphrodite's connections with Paphos are also evident in the Syllabo-Cypriot inscriptions from the island. This is clearest on one dedication from Chytroi/Kythrea, reading<sup>51</sup>:

*po-ro-to-ti-mo-e-mi-ta-se-pa-pi-a-se-to-i-e*  
*re-wo-se-ka-se-mi-ka-te-te-ke-ta-i*  
*pa-pi-a-i-apo-ro-ti-ta-i*

Πρωτοτιμω ημι τας Παφιας τω ιε | ρηφος, κας μι κατεθηκεται | Παφιαι  
 Αφρ οδιται

In this instance, the priest of Aphrodite himself, one Prototimos, refers specifically to Aphrodite (the one example of her name in Syllabo-Cypriot) as the Paphian. Several other examples come from the same site, all dedications to “The Paphian,” suggesting that Chytroi, much like the later Amathus, may have been settled by Paphians.

At Paphos itself neither the title “Paphian” nor the name “Aphrodite” appear in the Syllabo-Cypriot inscriptions. Rather, the goddess is known by the title Wanassa, the Bronze Age Greek word for “Queen,” suggesting that this title was given to the goddess by the newly-arrived Akhaian immigrants in the late Bronze Age. To give but one example from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE:<sup>52</sup>

*ti-mo-ka-ri-wo-se-pa-si-le*  
*wo-se-ta-se-wa-na-sa-se*  
*to-i-ye-[re]-o-se*

Τιμοχαριφος Βασιλη | φος τας Φανασ(σ)ας | τω ιε[ρη]ος

As in several cases, the Paphian king was also the priest of the Queen goddess. It would appear, then, that Aphrodite was recognized island-wide as the goddess of Paphos, the Paphian in the common parlance, but “The Queen” in Paphos itself.

Aphrodite's “reign” over Paphos remained constant well into the Roman period, when the goddess's new sanctuary was set upon its Bronze Age predecessor. Coins from the Roman period show the new

<sup>51</sup> Masson 1961:259, #234.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 112, #16.

sanctuary as having a central court of sorts — housing Aphrodite's baetyl, a black stone representing the goddess and still on display at the Palaipaphos Museum — flanked on either side by architectural wings. The image was so reminiscent of Minoan tripartite sanctuaries that some early scholars suggested that the original cult at Paphos was Minoan.

The Romans, as the Greeks before them, not only associated Aphrodite with Paphos, but they, too, saw it as one of her earliest and most holy sanctuaries. According to Pausanias (8.5.2):

Agapenor of Agkaios the son of Lykourgos, being king after Ekhemos, lead the Arkadians at Troy. After seizing Ilion, the storm which arose during the return sail home forced Agapenor and the navy of the Arkadians to Cyprus, and Agapenor became the founder of Paphos, and he built the temple of Aphrodite in Palaipaphos; before this time the goddess was worshipped by the Cypriots in a region called Golgois.

In a slightly different tradition, Tacitus recorded (*Historiae* 2.3):

The founder of the temple was the king Aerias, according to an ancient tradition, but some report that that is the name of the goddess herself. A more recent opinion claims that the temple was consecrated by Kinyras and that the goddess herself, born of the sea, had landed on this spot. . . . It is forbidden to spread blood on the table of sacrifice; they honor the altar with prayers and pure fire; and the altar, even though it is out in the open, is never wet by rain water. The statue of the goddess does not have human form; it is a circular block, larger at the bottom and growing smaller to the top, as a cone; the reason for this is obscure.

Both Cypriot and especially Greek sources indicate that Aphrodite was the chief deity of Paphos, regarded even as a “Queen” by the Greek settlers. The overall continuity of cult suggests that Aphrodite, by whatever name, was the goddess of Paphos at least since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and that it was from here that her cult spread to the Aegean. Aphrodite was clearly the “Queen” of Paphos from the time of Homer at least, and this status endured well into the Roman Age.

#### Ashtart at Kition

The cult of Ashtart arrived on Cyprus in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE, around 850, when the Phoenicians first colonized the eastern half of that island

starting at Kition. The archaeological evidence for their arrival is the presence of Red Slip I Ware, a style diagnostic of the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> Much of this pottery was discovered within the reconstructed temple overlying the remains of the Bronze Age Temple 3 in Kition's Area 2. Between this newly prolific Red Slip I Ware and the older, indigenous Cypriot wares of the Bronze Age lies a deposit of alluvium judged to represent a 150-year gap in the occupation record.<sup>54</sup> It would appear that the Phoenicians moved into a deserted town.

Two main data support the hypothesis that these newly arrived colonists brought the cult of Ashtart with them, and that they established the main temple at Kition (Temple 1) in her honor. The first is that the colony was established either by residents of Tyre, or as a joint venture between Tyre and Sidon, at a time when Ashtart was the dominant deity in the city pantheon. That Tyre was the metropolis of Kition is presented in an inscription dating to the Archaic Age discovered in Sardinia and known as the Nora Inscription. The eight lines of the inscription read as follows:

Temple of the cape of Nogar which is in Sardinia. May it be prosperous! May Tyre, the mother of Kition, be prosperous! Construction which constructed Nogar in the honour of Pumay!<sup>55</sup>

That Ashtart was the main goddess of Tyre as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century is suggested by Josephus Flavius in his *Against Apion* (1.118), where he records that King Hiram I of Tyre:

... cut down the forest of trees from the mountains they call Lebanon, taking them for the roofs of the temples. And having disassembled the ancient temples he constructed a temple of Herakles [read: Melqart] and of Ashtart; the first raising of the temple of Herakles was enacted in the month of Peritios.

As King Hiram I of Tyre is a contemporary of King Solomon of Israel, he might be dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Between the years 887 and 856 BCE, the temporarily united cities of Tyre and Sidon were under

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<sup>53</sup> Karageorghis 1976:95.

<sup>54</sup> Karageorghis 1973:20.

<sup>55</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1974:83.

the authority of King Ethba'al, who established the supremacy of the cult of Ashtart during his reign, having himself been her high priest before his kingship.<sup>56</sup> Finally, Ashtart's continued importance in Tyre is evident in the treaty concluded between King Esarhaddon of Assyria and King Ba'al of Tyre in 670 BCE, where Ashtart is named at the end as a warrior goddess (cited above).

The second datum is an inscription discovered in Temple 1 on a shard of Red Slip Ware. The orthography of the inscription is Phoenician and dates, according to Dupont-Sommer, to some time between 850–800 BCE.<sup>57</sup> The shard was found in a context preceding the burning and rebuilding of the temple in 800 BCE, so confirming the date. The inscription reads:

[In me]moriā. Moula shaved this hair (from his head), and he invok[ed the Lady Ash]tart, and Ash[tart heard his voice. And he offered (as a sacrifice): for Moula, a sheep and a l[amb with] this hair; for the household of Moula, a sheep. [This] recipient [here], Moula completed with [this] hair 7 times, because of the vo[w] of Tamassos.<sup>58</sup>

There were no fewer than four temples in service during the Phoenician habitation of Kition, each probably dedicated to different deities. The general paucity of Phoenician inscriptions makes it extremely difficult to tell which deities were worshipped in which temples, although the Red Ward shard from Temple 1 at least indicates that the main temple was dedicated to Ashtart. It seems likely that another goddess (Anat?) was worshipped in Temple 5, while male deities were probably revered in Temples 2 and 4 (Temple 3 was exclusively a Bronze Age phenomenon, replaced by Temple 1 in the Iron Age). Ashtart was probably not the only goddess brought over from the Levant (at least one cult of Anat is attested on Archaic Cyprus), but she did have pride of place in the Cypro-Phoenician pantheon.

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<sup>56</sup> Karageorghis 1988:155.

<sup>57</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1974:90–94; Guzzo Amadasi and Karageorghis 1977:149, D 21.

<sup>58</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1974:91; Peckham 1987:85.

### Aphrodite and Ashtart Together: Amathus

According to a legend related by Theopompos, Amathus was founded after the Trojan War (read: at the end of the Bronze Age) by King Kinyras of Paphos when he was driven from that city by the arrival of the Akhaians lead by Agapenor of Tegea, who was himself returning from Troy. Kinyras and his followers, moving eastwards, established the kingdom of Amathus, where they instituted the cult of the Paphian goddess. From that point forwards, the priesthood of the Paphian ran in the line of Kinyras. This legend is supported by the archaeological evidence, which shows no Bronze Age habitation of the site.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the site is not mentioned by any name in the list of city names of Cyprus in the Medinet Habu inscription of 1189 BCE, which mentions no cities between Kourion and Kition.<sup>60</sup>

Human occupation of Amathus only begins in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>61</sup> The population is clearly indigenous Eteocypriot, based on the style of tomb architecture used, the pottery styles, and the continued use of Eteocypriot script/language at the city until the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>62</sup>

To date, there is no architectural evidence for the cult of the Paphian at Amathus before the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when Amathus “bloomed” into an urban center. Small-scale evidence for the cult may be present in votive and funerary remains, including images of priests wearing bull masks, and the Minoan-inspired Goddess With Upraised Arms, which was adopted with fervor in Cyprus in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>63</sup> Both types of figurine indicate the presence of the Eteocypriot religion, such as that practiced at Paphos and Bronze Age Kition.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries copious Phoenician wares begin to appear in the graves at Amathus,<sup>64</sup> while a Phoenician inscription from Moutti Sinoas, a hill summit 10 km. north of the settlement,

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<sup>59</sup> Aupert and Hermary 1985:230; Hermary 1993:171.

<sup>60</sup> Aupert 1997:19.

<sup>61</sup> Hermary 1987:376.

<sup>62</sup> Hermary 1987:376–77; Aupert 1997:20–23.

<sup>63</sup> Aupert 1997:23.

<sup>64</sup> Hermary 1987:380.

attests to a Semitic cult of Baal in the area. Furthermore, there was a clearly Phoenician necropolis established in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>65</sup> These data suggest that Amathus in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries became the home of a Phoenician colony, possibly named Khartihadasht.<sup>66</sup> The arrival of Phoenician wares corresponds to a thriving new economy at Amathus, possibly fueled by the new settlers. Whatever the cause, it was during this period that the earliest known temple at Amathus was constructed. The votives associated with the sanctuary show a strong combination of Cypriot and Phoenician characteristics, and it appears that both the Cypriot and Phoenician populations worshipped the deity at the sanctuary. The strong presence of female votive images, the connection with Paphos, and the later association of the sanctuary with Aphrodite (see below) all argue that the Amathus deity was a goddess. If the cult was brought by the Cypriot re-settlers in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, then we would expect this to be the cult of the Paphian goddess, an identification strengthened by the later epigraphy.

The identification of the Phoenician deity is a more tenuous matter. There are to date no Phoenician inscriptions from Amathus which offer a name for their local divinity, unlike the above-mentioned inscriptions from Moutti Sinoas.<sup>67</sup> The majority of the votive remains from the sanctuary area, however, are feminine in nature, especially the Nude Goddess images prevalent in the Near East since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium. In the Bronze Age and Iron Age Levant specifically, such images are associated with Ashtart (although both the Cypriots and the Greeks had alternate interpretations of these images, and so a direct correspondence cannot be assumed). The feminizing nature of

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<sup>65</sup> Aupert 1997:24.

<sup>66</sup> Karageorghis 1988:190.

<sup>67</sup> One inscription which some scholars have taken as evidence for the Phoenician nature of the cult at Amathus is a 7<sup>th</sup>-century vase with an Eteocypriot inscription reading *a-na-ta*, which might serve as evidence for a cult of the Canaanite goddess Anat, who had cults elsewhere on Cyprus in the Iron Age. However, as Eteocypriot has yet to be translated, there is no way to know if either the word *a-na-ta*, or the several inscriptions from the site reading *a-na*, might not be a word, name, or title in the Cypriot language. See Aupert 1996:40.

the votives suggest that, as with the Eteocypriots, the Phoenicians probably recognized a goddess at the Amathus sanctuary, probably Ashtart as per the iconography. To this we might add two further data. One is the above-mentioned arrival of the cult of Ashtart with the first Phoenician colonists on Cyprus, specifically at Kition, proving that the cult of this goddess did come to the island at an early date with this population. The second is the fact that, in the Iron Age, Ashtart came to “absorb” other Levantine goddesses. The goddesses Anat and Athirat, of extreme importance in the Bronze Age corpora from areas such as Ugarit, all but vanish in the Iron Age, when Ashtart becomes the première goddess of Phoenicia.

All this suggests, although unfortunately not conclusively, that the goddess worshipped by the Phoenicians at Amathus was Ashtart. Thus, a second cult of Ashtart on the island, and one in which she was probably, from the beginning associated/equated with the Paphian.

Whom did the Greeks understand to be worshipped at the sanctuary of Amathus? Several arguments suggest that the Greeks believed the goddess of Amathus to be Aphrodite. The first is the rather simple fact that, to the Greeks, Aphrodite and the Paphian were one and the same goddess. A cult to the Paphian would automatically translate into a cult of Aphrodite for a Greek.

Then there is the later literary tradition. Tacitus specifically recorded that (*Annals* 3.62):

Then came the Cypriots on behalf of three shrines, the oldest of which had been set up by their founder Aërias to Paphian Venus, the second by his son Amathus to Venus of Amathus, and the last to Jupiter of Salamis, by Teuker when he fled from the wrath of his father Telamon.

This evidence from Tacitus suggests that the foundation of the Amathus sanctuary occurred a generation after that of the Paphos sanctuary, and that the one derived, family-style, from the other. So much is supported by the archaeological evidence. Tacitus’ evidence concerning the sanctuary at Paphos is also in line with the archaeological evidence from Palaipaphos (see above), suggesting that the Roman his-

torian did have a reasonably good knowledge of the religious history of the island.

When epigraphic evidence becomes available at Amathus in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the sanctuary is already attributed to either “The Kyprian” or specifically to “Aphrodite Kypris.”<sup>68</sup> These attributions to Aphrodite, specifically Cypriot Aphrodite, must be understood in the light of the strong continuity at Amathus. The sanctuary constructed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century remained in continual use through the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, when replaced with a snazzier Roman version (the “Nabatean”). A constant population (especially the Eteocypriot), a constant cult (8<sup>th</sup> through 1<sup>st</sup> centuries), and 4<sup>th</sup>-century references to Aphrodite at the moment when inscriptions first become available at the sanctuary all suggest that the cult at Amathus was conceived of as accommodating a goddess revered by the Cypriots as the Paphian, the Phoenicians as Ashtart, and the Greeks as Aphrodite. This is far more likely than the suggestion that the Hellenistic Greeks “turned over” the sanctuary to the cult of Aphrodite upon their arrival, especially as one of the deities already revered at the sanctuary was a clearly recognizable (to the Greeks) form of Aphrodite. It is not to be wondered at that Tacitus recognized Amathus as one of the oldest, and most sacred, sanctuaries of Aphrodite in Cyprus. Thus, the evidence suggests that, as early as the Archaic Age, Paphia, Ashtart, and Aphrodite were recognized as different ethnic manifestations of the same goddess on Cyprus.

The earliest syncretism between Aphrodite and Ashtart, then, is a fairly straightforward process. On Cyprus, both goddesses were recognized as divine queens. As the “Queen of Cyprus” equaled the “Queen of Cyprus,” and as the earliest manifestation of Aphrodite on the island probably shared more attributes, such as militarism, with Ashtart than her later Greek persona, the *interpretatio* syncretism between the two goddesses was simple and readily comprehensible.

Difficulties, however, lie in the syncretism between these deities *outside* of Cyprus. First, Aphrodite was not the queen goddess in the Greek pantheon; Hera was (although Aphrodite *did* have the title

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<sup>68</sup> Hermary 1988:101.



“Queen” and consort-of-Zeus status in some poleis, see below). Second, the Greeks do not appear to have been cognizant of Ashtart until the 5<sup>th</sup> century at the absolute earliest, when an epichoric inscription bearing the goddess’s name came to light at Corinth.<sup>69</sup> By necessity, the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism must have taken place differently in the Aegean than on Cyprus. One hypothesis is that the full syncretism only began in the 4<sup>th</sup> century at the rise of the Hellenistic Era, when all Greek deities were undergoing a process of syncretization with the various deities of Egypt and the Near East. It is during this period that inscriptions equating Ashtart with Aphrodite appear (see below), thus providing our clearest evidence for the syncretism as understood by the Greeks.

However, it is evident that the Greeks thought of Aphrodite as “Oriental” long before they knew the name “Ashtart.” Aphrodite appears as “The Cypriot” as early as Homer, and “The Syrian” by the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Herodotos equated/syncretized almost all Near Eastern goddesses with her. As such, it appears that the process of syncretization had already begun for Aphrodite as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century, certainly by the 6<sup>th</sup>. The questions then become, how and why did this process begin, and when precisely did this syncretism take on Ashtart, by that name, as a reciprocating partner?

### *Chronology for the “Orientalizing” of Aphrodite*

#### The Early Archaic — Homer, Hesiod, and Cyprus<sup>70</sup>

The earliest evidence that the Greeks saw Aphrodite as “Oriental” comes from Homer and Hesiod, who place Aphrodite “at home” on the island of Cyprus, especially at Paphos. In the Song of Demodokos, Book 8 of the *Odyssey*, Homer relates how after her illicit affair with Ares:

When the two were free of the bonds (which seemed even stronger than they were to them),

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<sup>69</sup> Williams 1986:12.

<sup>70</sup> For the dating of Homer to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, see Graham 1995: *passim*.

immediately Ares went off to Thrace,  
 while smile-loving Aphrodite went to Cyprus,  
 to Paphos, where are her temple and altar of sacrifice.

For Hesiod, in his *Theogony*, 192–205,

First among the holy Kytherians  
 she drew near, thence she went to sea-girt Cyprus,  
 and the reverend fair goddess walked forth, and about  
 her slender feet grass sprung forth.

One of the goddess's common epithets in the epic repertoire is *Kypris*, a title associated with the island of Cyprus with far less ambiguity than her epithet *Kytherea* with the island of Kythera.<sup>71</sup> The goddess is notably Cypriot, with priority given to her cult at Paphos. Considering the origins of the goddess as espoused here, this is a fairly logical association.

#### The Middle Archaic — Adonis

A further piece of evidence showing orientalizing tendencies for Aphrodite was her relationship with Adonis. Adonis himself is a vexing and ambiguous character in Greek religion. It is universally accepted that Adonis derives from the Near East. His name is clearly a Hellenization of the title *adôn*, meaning “Lord,” possibly referring to the Levantine storm god Baal. Baal, at least in his Bronze Age, Ugaritic persona, was a dying and rising god, killed by the deity Mot (literally “Death”) and resurrected by his sister Anat. A similar theme appears in the cult of a related Phoenician deity — Melqart. While this Phoenician god was generally translated into the Greek consciousness as Herakles (and, probably, the child hero Melikertes revered at the Isthmean Games), it is likely that both Baal and Melqart contributed to the persona of Adonis. In line with Greek ways of thinking, though, such a “dying” god (who, in the earlier literature, does not rise again) cannot truly be a divinity. As such, the Greek Adonis should be understood more as a *heros* than a *theos* in Greek mythology.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Morgan 1978.

<sup>72</sup> Mettinger 2001:114.

The earliest reference to Adonis in Greece appears in Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, referenced in a later scholion. According to Hesiod, Adonis was the son of Phoinix (literally "Phoenician Man"). Later authors, notably Apollodoros and Ovid, saw Adonis rather as a Cypriot, the son of Kinyras, founder of the Kinyraid Dynasty who were the traditional priests of Aphrodite at Amathus (see above). As such, rather in contrast to Aphrodite, Adonis's associations went from east to west, starting in the Levant (probably Byblos, where his cult remained very strong) and moving west to Cyprus. This in fact may be a result of the desire to link the hero more closely with the Cypriot goddess.

That Adonis' cult was linked to Aphrodite is already apparent by the early 6<sup>th</sup> century, when Sappho wrote (140a, preserved in Hephaisteion's *Handbook on Meters*):

'Delicate Adonis is dying, Kytherea; what are we to do?'  
'Beat your breasts girls, and tear your clothes!'

(Trans. Campbell)

Kytherea, as stated above, is an epithet of Aphrodite. That Adonis is "dying" shows that already his role in Aphrodite's cult is entrenched: the dying lover of the goddess.

As discussed above, it is difficult to determine which Near Eastern deity became Greek Adonis. If Baal, as revered in Byblos, then we might identify the god's Near Eastern consort as the Baalat Gubal, the "Mistress of Byblos," convincingly identified by Bonnet as a manifestation of Egyptian Hathor.<sup>73</sup> If Melqart, then the consort would be Phoenician Ashtart. As the evidence will show, which god, and thus which goddess, is actually irrelevant at this early date, for the Greeks saw both goddesses as eastern equivalents of Aphrodite. What is significant in this instance is merely that Aphrodite was paired early on with a distinctly Near Eastern deity.

#### The Late Archaic — Syrian Aphrodite

Over time Aphrodite's direct connections moved farther east. At Berezan on the Black Sea, A. Rusjaeva discovered a sherd dated to

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<sup>73</sup> Bonnet 1996:20–22.

the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century inscribed “Athenomandros dedicated me to Syrian Aphrodite.” At near-by Olbia, a mid-5<sup>th</sup>-century black-painted cup, found in a bothros, was dedicated to Syrian Aphrodite by one Mêtôr ([A]φροδίτη Συριη Μητρω).<sup>74</sup> It is typical that such toponymic epithets refer to a prominent cult site of the deity, such as Argive Hera, Kyllenian Hermes, Pythian Apollo (referring to his sanctuary at Delphi), or Paphian Aphrodite. Before the Hellenistic period, however, there are no sanctuaries of Greek Aphrodite, or any Greek deity, in the Levant. Not even Al-Mina, where there were early and close relations between Greeks, Cypriots, and Phoenicians, has brought to light any evidence for a cult of Aphrodite (or any other deity).<sup>75</sup> The oldest sanctuary of Aphrodite attested on foreign soil is her sanctuary at Naukratis in Egypt, established at the very end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>76</sup>, and clearly not a part of what the Greeks considered to be “Syria.” It is clear, then, that the Greeks who made these dedications saw a close connection, even identification, between Aphrodite and a goddess revered in Syria. Vianu specifically suggests that this “Syrian Aphrodite” should be understood as Atargatis, the “Syrian Goddess” written about in Lucian’s *De dea Syria*. However, Atargatis is only attested from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE; to propose such an early identification with this goddess is anachronistic. It is far more likely that these inscriptions refer simply to Aphrodite, with Syrian associations as understood by the dedicators.

Evidently by the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century, in the Black Sea region at least, a cult of a Syrian Aphrodite was recognized, a cult usually attributed exclusively to the Hellenistic period.<sup>77</sup> As to the cause of this “sudden” appearance of an Asiatic Aphrodite to the north, Ustinova suggests that it was the Skythians’ foray into the Levant which prompted the

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<sup>74</sup> Vianu 1997:15.

<sup>75</sup> Luke 2003:17.

<sup>76</sup> Coulson and Leonard 1982:372.

<sup>77</sup> Vianu 1997:15. One must remember, though, that at this early period the Greeks tended to refer to the entire Levant as Syria, well down into Palestine. Thus, in Syrian Aphrodite what we have is Levantine Aphrodite, perhaps.

association. Having ransacked the temple of Aphrodite at Ashkalon (Herodotos 1.103, more below), the Skythians may have noted several similarities between the goddess at Ashkalon (Aphrodite for the Greeks, Ashtart, presumably, for the Phoenicians) and their own great goddess Agrimpasa, not the least of which were the eunuch/transvestite prophets/priests — the *Enareis* — associated with both cults.<sup>78</sup> There are, however, three weaknesses to this argument. First, we are forced to rely on Herodotos' account of the Skythian invasion of Ashkalon, for which we have no corroborating evidence. Second, we yet know very little about the cults of Ashkalon, beyond Biblical references: the excavations at Ashkalon are far from complete, with no data yet available for sanctuaries. Finally, while the Ashlakon link might explain how the Skythians came to see a southern orientation for their Agrimpasa, it does not explain how the local Greeks would have translated this into a cult of Syrian Aphrodite *per se*. While the first two arguments are based on negative evidence, thus requiring time to determine, it is perhaps not amiss to consider alternate sources for the identification.

More likely, what caused Aphrodite to change from a specifically Cypriot goddess to a Syrian/Levantine one was colonization. When Homer and Hesiod were composing their epics in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Greek colonization was only just beginning. By the 6<sup>th</sup> century this process was well under way, bringing Greeks into increasingly close contact with their co-colonists of the Mediterranean — the Phoenicians. Possibly due to Cypriot influence, the Greeks decided that the goddess revered by the Phoenicians was their own Aphrodite. As the cult of this Cypriot Ashtart extended past the confines of the island, so too did the Greek conception of Aphrodite's eastern orientations spread.

#### The Classical Period — Herodotos and Syncretism

It is with Herodotos that our next data come concerning the eastern connections, even origins, of Aphrodite. In Book I, section 103 of his *Histories*, the so-called Father of History claimed that:

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<sup>78</sup> Ustinova 1998:213–15.

And when they [the Skythians] appeared in Syro-Palestine, Psammetikhos, the King of Egypt, entreating them with gifts and prayers dissuaded them from proceeding further. Then they, heading back again, appeared in the city Ashkalon of Syria; the majority of the Skythians passed by unharmed, but some of them, seizing the sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania, plundered it. This is the sanctuary, as I discovered through inquiry, (which is) the oldest of all the sanctuaries of this goddess; for the sanctuary of Cyprus originated there (Ashkalon), as the Cypriots themselves say, and as for the one amongst the Kytherians, the Phoenicians are its founders, who are from Syria too.

Later, in section 133, he notes that:

To these alone [the Persians] sacrifice since the beginning, learning only later to sacrifice as well to Ourania, learning this from the Assyrians and Arabs. Assyrians call Aphrodite Mylitta; the Arabs call her Alilat, and the Persians Mitran.

He reaffirms this nomenclature again in section 199, where he claims that:

The most shameful of the customs among the Babylonians is this: It is necessary for every local woman to sit in the sanctuary of Aphrodite once in life to “mingle” with a foreign man. But many do not deem themselves worthy of mingling with the others, thinking highly of themselves due to their wealth, and they set themselves before the sanctuary having arrived in covered chariots, with many a maidservant in tow. But the majority act thus: in the temenos of Aphrodite many women sit wearing a garland of string about their heads. Some come forward, others remain in the background. They have straight passages in all directions through the women, by which the foreigners passing through might make their selection. Once a woman sits there, she may not return home before someone of the foreigners tossing money into her lap should mingle with her outside the sanctuary. And in tossing he must say thus: “I summon you by the goddess Mylitta.” The Assyrians call Aphrodite Mylitta. The money is of any amount, for it may not be rejected: This is not their sacred custom, for the money is sacred. The woman follows the first man who tossed her money, nor may she reject anyone. When she should have mingled, having discharged her obligation to the goddess, she leaves for home, and after this time no one might take her, offering gifts no matter how great. Those who are attractive and tall go home quickly, while those homely in these respects wait about a long time, being unable to fulfill the law, some among them wait about for three or four years. And in some areas of Cyprus the custom is similar to this.

These passages of Herodotos bring to light what is perhaps the most important point concerning the “Orientalizing” of Aphrodite: Herodotos only recognizes one great goddess revered in the Near East. This is evident in his identifying each of them only with Aphrodite. Babylonian Mylitta is Aphrodite, as is Arabian Alilat, as is Persian Mitran. As T. Harrison notes, apart from Earth in Persia, Aphrodite is the only goddess whom Herodotos recognizes among his eastern neighbors.<sup>79</sup>

At this point, then, we might speak of a general syncretism between Aphrodite and a Generic Great Goddess of the Near East, with different names among the different civilizations of the Near East, but all functionally identified by the Greeks as one deity. One might argue that this already suggests a syncretism with Ashtart, as the Iron Age Near Eastern materials indicate that Ashtart was the dominant goddess of the Levant during this period. In the Bronze Age Canaanite pantheon, as revealed by the Ugaritic corpus, Athirat (Asherah) was queen of the deities and Anat the warrior goddess and resurrector of Baal. Athtart (Ashtart) played a lesser role in the mythology, usually seen either as a companion to Anat, or a possible love interest of Baal (“Athtart the Huntress”). By the Iron Age, however, the pantheon seems to have shrunk. Both Athirat and Anat are at least partially eclipsed by the now far more prominent Ashtart.<sup>80</sup> As the most prominent Levantine/Phoenician goddess, it is easy to see how a generic Near Eastern Great Goddess, as equated with Aphrodite in the Greek corpus, could be identified as Ashtart, even in the absence of that goddess’s name. Thus, in a way, an Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism was in place already in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, even if the name “Ashtart” was not specifically in use.

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<sup>79</sup> Harrison 2002:210–11. In other areas, such as Egypt and Skythia, Herodotos equates Aphrodite with Hathor and Agrimpasa (see above) respectively. Such equations continue to be relevant in the ensuing ages, although in the Hellenistic period Aphrodite is equated more with Isis than Hathor. See below.

<sup>80</sup> Stuckey 2002:43 records references to both Asherah and Anat in the Iron Age, locating Asherah specifically in the Biblical materials of ancient Israel, and Anat both as consort of Yahweh in Elephantine, Egypt and as an equivalent of Athena on Cyprus.

Such a syncretism with an unnamed goddess who is, nevertheless, clearly Ashtart occurs at the end of the Classical period. In 333, in the archonship of Nikokratos, the Athenians set up a stele recording the decision of the *boulê* to grant the merchants and metics from Kition the right to establish a sanctuary of Aphrodite on Athenian land.<sup>81</sup> The idea presented was that the merchants could then worship their patron goddess when away from home, and that the Cypriot metics of Athens (from Kition, presumably) could use the sanctuary for their rites.

At this early date, however, well before the Hellenistic, specifically Ptolemaic, conquests of Cyprus, Kition was far from Hellenized, and the local goddess was still Ashtart (see above). In truth, the Kition merchants were requesting the right to found a sanctuary in honor of Ashtart, patroness of Kition, who otherwise had no cult in the city. The Athenians simply translated this goddess as Aphrodite. Nevertheless, as R. Parker notes, the Athenians do not appear to have regarded this “Oriental” Aphrodite as their own, and Greeks, Phoenicians (and Egyptians!) continued to worship their “own” deities at separate sanctuaries.<sup>82</sup>

#### The Hellenistic Age — Interpretatio or Henotheism?

The somewhat general syncretisms which occurred between Aphrodite and the goddesses of the Near East remain consistent in the Hellenistic Age. At this time we have the clearest evidence for a direct correspondence between Aphrodite and Ashtart by that name in the epigraphy. However, both the epigraphy and the literature also make extremely evident that this syncretism was hardly exclusive or direct. While Aphrodite is identified as Ashtart in inscriptions from Athens, Kos and Delos, she is also equated with Atargatis, Anaitis, and Isis

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<sup>81</sup> Tod 1985:250, #189.

<sup>82</sup> Parker 1997:160–61. On the one hand, such separate cults argue quite strongly that no full syncretism had taken place between the “Greek” and “Phoenician” Aphrodites. However, as the Greeks did recognize that the same deity could be venerated in different manners and rituals, the distinction between Greek vs. Phoenician Aphrodite might also be understood as a difference between Greek and Phoenician cults of the same deity. Rudhardt 1992:224–27.



in the Hellenistic period.<sup>83</sup> Ashtart is equated with Isis and, in one extremely interesting inscription, the *Baalat Gubal* of Byblos.

To consider the evidence chronologically, we must begin with a late 4<sup>th</sup>-century bilingual inscription from the island of Kos. The Greek and Phoenician text reads:

[ΑΦΡ]ΟΔΙΤΗΙ ΙΑΡΥΣΑΤΟ  
 ..... ΤΙΜΟΣ ΑΒΔΑΛΩΝΥΜΟΥ  
 [ΣΙΑ]ΩΝΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ  
 [ΥΠ]ΕΡ ΤΩΝ ΠΛΕΟΝΤΩΝ  
  
 LRBTY L'ŠTRT P'LT T'L – Z'[NK] – [  
 BN MLK 'BD' LNM MLK SDNYM 'L HY K[L MLHM ?]  
 'Š (?) — 'L (?) KL MŠ'T (?) ' Š – MN (?) LN[<sup>84</sup>

Here one “son of Abdalonymos, King of Sidon,” has made a dedication to “Aphrodite” in the Greek text, “Queen Ashtart” in the Phoenician. As the texts are parallel, it is evident that Queen Ashtart is the direct correspondent of Aphrodite.

This parallel is maintained in a 4<sup>th</sup>-century bilingual funerary inscription discovered near the church of Aghia Trias in Athens in 1861.<sup>85</sup> The first Greek line of text identifies the interred as the son of one Antipatros Aphrodisios (Αντιπατρος Αφροδισιου). The Phoenician text reads: “I am Shmr, son of Abd' Ashtart.”<sup>86</sup> In this instance, the term *Aphrodisiou*, “Belonging to Aphrodite” is a direct parallel with *Abd' Ashtart*, “Servant of Ashtart.” Thus, once again, there is a one-to-one parallel between Aphrodite and Ashtart so-named.

<sup>83</sup> Somewhat late for this study, but still of extreme interest, is a reference in Josephus referring to a bilingual Greek/Nabatean dedication on the island of Kos equating Aphrodite with the Nabatean goddess al-'Uzza. See Levi Della Vida 1938 for references.

<sup>84</sup> Bonnet 1996:159, E 11.

<sup>85</sup> The funerary inscription is generally dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, although before or after the death of Alexander is not clear. Considering the presence of a native Phoenician buried in Athens, I have decided to place the inscription with Hellenistic materials, rather than the late Classical.

<sup>86</sup> Palmer and Sandys 1872:48–49.

In the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the ethnographer and historian Berossos, as discussed in section 5.65.2–3 of Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* and Agathias' *Historiae* 2.24, recorded that among the Persians Aphrodite was named Anaitis/Anahita, a goddess also identified with Artemis.<sup>87</sup>

The inscriptions from Delos dating to the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods show direct syncretisms/translations between Aphrodite, Ashtart, Isis, and Atargatis. The direct *interpretatio* between Aphrodite and Ashtart appears on Delos inscriptions 1719 and 2305, both dedicated by persons from Ashkalon on the Levantine coast. In both instances, Aphrodite Ourania is equated with Palestinian Ashtart. ID 1719, dating to c. 100,<sup>88</sup> reads:

Φιλοστρατος Φιλοστρατου  
 Ασκαλωνιτης τραπεζιτευω[ν]  
 εν Δελωι, υπερ της Ασκαλωνι-  
 των πολεως και εαυτου και  
 γυναικος και τε[κνων Α]σταρ[τηι]  
 [Παλαιστινι Ο]υρ[α]νια[ι]  
 Α[φρ]οδιτη ΤΙΓ' Λ

ID 2305, dating to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, reads:

Δι Ουριωι και Ασταρτηι Παλαιστινι  
 Αφροδιτηι Ουρανιαι, θεοις επηκοις,  
 Δαμων Δημητριου Ασκαλωνιτης  
 σωθεις απο πειρατων,  
 ευχην.  
 Ου θεμιτον δε προσαγειν  
 αιγειον, υικον, βοος θελειας.

Considering how strong the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism appears in so much of the modern scholarship, it is amazing that three inscriptions, plus the funerary monument mentioned above, are the only direct evidence from the Greek world which equates these two goddesses by name. Other inscriptions from Delos show syncretisms between

<sup>87</sup> Verbrugghe and Wickersham 2000:62–63.

<sup>88</sup> Bruneau 1970:346.

Aphrodite, Ashtart, and Isis, or between Aphrodite and Atargatis. ID 2132, dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE reads:

Ισιδι Σωτειραι Ασταρτει Αφροδιτη Ευπλοιαι επ[η]κωι]  
και Ερωτι Απφοκρατει Απολλωνι, Ανδρομαχος Φανομαχου  
[υπερ εαυτου] και γυναικος και τεκνων χαριστηριον.<sup>89</sup>

ID 2158 and 2040 are both dedicated to “Isis Aphrodite Dikaia.”<sup>90</sup> It is likely that Andronikos son of Phanomakhos, the dedicator of ID 2132, came from Ptolemaic-occupied Cyprus, thus the need to recognize the Greek/Cypriot, Phoenician/Cypriot, and Egyptian pantheons. The utter absence of Ashtart from dedications ID 2158 and 2040 may indicate dedications from residents of Egypt, with no need to recognize the Phoenician pantheon.

Ashtart is also absent from a series of dedications discovered on Delos in the “Syrian” sanctuary, in which deities were revered either by their Syrian or Greek names. Here Aphrodite is most clearly syncretized with the Syrian goddess Atargatis, Lucian’s *Dea Syria*.<sup>91</sup> This is evident on ID 2266, dating to the early first century BCE:

Ποπλιος Α[ι]μυλιος Λευκιου Ρωμαιος την εξ[ε-]  
δραν εκ των (ι)διων υπερ εαυτου και του υι-  
ου αυτου Ποπλιου, Αγνη Αφροδιτη Αταργα-  
τι και Αδαδου (*sic*), χαριστηριον, εφ’ιερεως (Σω)σιβι-  
ου του Σωσιπατρου Κηφισιως, ζακορευ-  
οντος Κρατητος, επμελητου δε της νη-  
σου Ανδρεου του Ανδρεου  
Πειραιως.

<sup>89</sup> The association between Aphrodite and Isis, especially in this instance, may derive from their common roles of protectors of those on sea voyages: “Savior Isis” and “Aphrodite Fair-Voyage.” Scholtz 2003:237. Ashtart’s presence here, but without epithet, may indicate her concern with similar matters. As guardian of sailors, Isis also bore the titles Pharia (of the lighthouse) and Pelagia (of the sea) in Ptolemaic times. Turcan 1992:79–80.

<sup>90</sup> Bruneau 1970:348.

<sup>91</sup> More on this below.

Here, Aphrodite and Atargatis are clearly regarded as the same entity, both given the epithet *Hagnê*, and both associated with the Near Eastern god Hadad (a storm deity, also commonly called Baal = “Lord.”) Hadad and Atargatis receive common dedications on both ID 2258 and 2261 *inter alia*, while Hadad and Aphrodite are joined on ID 2248.

Of particular interest are inscriptions ID 2251 and 2252, where Aphrodite, without reference to Atargatis, is called Ἀγνὴ Ἀφροδίτη Συρίῳ θεῶι. Once again, as by the Black Sea in the Archaic Age, Aphrodite is the “Syrian Goddess.”

Evidently, as in the Classical period, Aphrodite is identified with more than just one Near Eastern goddess in the Hellenistic Age, with the most common syncretisms occurring between Ouranian Aphrodite and Palestinian Ashtart, Aphrodite and Isis, and Sacred Aphrodite and Atargatis. For her own part, Ashtart was syncretised with goddesses other than merely Aphrodite. As shown above on ID 2132, Ashtart as well as Aphrodite could be identified with Isis. ID 2101 was dedicated to “Isis, Mother of the Deities, Ashtart,” indicating that Ashtart could be syncretised with the queen of the Egyptian pantheon without Aphrodite.<sup>92</sup>

Perhaps the most illuminating piece of epigraphic evidence concerning the multiplicity of syncretisms existing between Aphrodite, Ashtart, and the various goddesses of the Near East is a 4<sup>th</sup>-century votive throne found at Byblos with a bilingual, Phoenician-Greek dedication. The Phoenician reads LB‘LT GBL (“To the Lady of Byblos”); the Greek ΑΣΤΑΡΤΗ ΘΕΑ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΗ (“Ashtart Great Goddess”).<sup>93</sup> In this instance, we have a dedication in Phoenician to the *Baalat Gubal*, queen of the Byblian pantheon and often identified as a Levantine version of Egyptian Hathor and/or Isis,<sup>94</sup> equated in the Greek text with the Great Goddess Ashtart. While Mettinger suggests that this inscription indicates a long-standing identification of the *Baalat Gubal* as

<sup>92</sup> Bruneau 1970:348.

<sup>93</sup> Bonnet 1996:156, #10.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 19–20.

Ashtart, it is far more likely that such an equation only emerged at a late date, with the “Mistress of Byblos” understood as a manifestation of Hathor/Isis since the Bronze Age.<sup>95</sup>

What all these data make clear is that the perceived Aphrodite-Ashtart *interpretatio*-syncretism is an exaggeration. While it is true that some evidence does show that Aphrodite Ourania specifically was equated with Palestinian Ashtart, alternate data reveal Aphrodite as Anaitis, Atargatis, and even Isis;<sup>96</sup> Ashtart as Isis and the Lady of Byblos/Hathor. The syncretism is not one-to-one, but general, equating Aphrodite (Ourania or otherwise) with a full family of Near Eastern goddesses. This, of course, is somewhat emblematic of the ultimate henotheistic-syncretic tendencies of the first centuries. As the 1<sup>st</sup>-century priest Isidoros inscribed on the temple of Isis at Medinet-Madi in the Fayum of Egypt:

The Syrians call you Ashtart-Artemis-Nanaia and the tribes of the Lycians Queen Leto, and the Thracians call you indeed the mother of the gods, and the Greeks mighty-enthroned Hera and Aphrodite and good Hestia, and Rhea and Demeter, but the Egyptians Thiousis, because in your own person alone you are all the other goddesses named by the peoples. (*SEG*, viii [1937], 548; trans. Walbank 1992)

Likewise, Apuleius in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE wrote in his *The Golden Ass* (11.5):

The primeval Phrygians call me Pessinuntica, Mother of the gods; the Athenians, sprung from their own soil, call me Cecropian Artemis; for the islanders of Cyprus I am Paphian Aphrodite; for the archers of Crete I am Dictynna; for the trilingual Sicilians, Stygian Proserpina; and for the Eleusinians their ancient Mother of the Corn. (Trans. R. Graves 1990)

### *The Syncretism Reconsidered*

These data reveal two separate, although not mutually exclusive, understandings of the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism in the ancient Mediterranean. On the one hand there is the syncretism as it evolved on

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<sup>95</sup> Mettinger 2001:211; Bonnet 1996:21.

<sup>96</sup> One must note that a number of Hellenistic queens also associated themselves with Aphrodite in their royal cults.

the island of Cyprus. As discussed above, Aphrodite herself probably evolved on this island, ultimately being the Greek manifestation of the Cypriot goddess known variously throughout the island as Paphia, Golia, or Wanassa. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Phoenician colonists brought the cult of Ashtart to Cyprus, first at Kition, later spreading throughout the island. A continuum emerged between Paphia, Aphrodite, and Ashtart, all Queens of Cyprus, perhaps first fully coalescing at the site of Amathus. In this instance, one might at least partially attribute the close Aphrodite-Ashtart identification to the very island nature of Cyprus: A limited number of deities, of goddesses were worshipped on the island in the early Iron Age. Aphrodite and Ashtart came to be equated somewhat exclusively with each other as they were the only two dominant goddesses on the island.

This was certainly not the case in the rest of the world. In Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, Babylon, Assyria the Greeks found a plethora of goddesses whom they could relate to Aphrodite. At first many of these were a bit of a muddle in the Greek consciousness, all of the Near Eastern goddesses being essentially the same goddess, all basically Aphrodite. Later, especially in the Hellenistic period, the various Near Eastern goddesses came to have their own identities, some more prominently identified with Aphrodite or each other than others. Nevertheless, outside of Cyprus the Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretism was not exclusive or consistent.

Rather, one might argue that certain tendencies of syncretism were consistent. In general, when the Greeks came across the cult of a Near Eastern goddess, including Ashtart, they were inclined to identify that goddess as Aphrodite. This is especially the case at the Sicilian site of Eryx, where both goddesses had/shared a large and wealthy sanctuary. The region was originally settled by indigenous Elymians. Phoenicians began establishing trading centers in the region by the 8<sup>th</sup> century, first on the small island of Motya, later at Panormus and Soloeis *inter alia*.<sup>97</sup> Physical remains from Eryx specifically show a Cypro-Phoenician presence from the 6<sup>th</sup> century, as well as a strong

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<sup>97</sup> Serrati 2000:11.

Carthaginian presence until the Roman period.<sup>98</sup> As was the case with Kition (see above) the early presence of Phoenicians at Eryx suggests that the goddess worshipped at the sanctuary was Ashtart, a probability strengthened by the later worship of that goddess at the site. A 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup>-century BCE marble plaque (now lost) from the site began its dedication: LRBT L'ŠTRT 'RK, "To the Great One, to Ashtart of Eryx."<sup>99</sup>

By the 5<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Greeks had thoroughly established themselves throughout Sicily, taking control of the sanctuary at Eryx as well.<sup>100</sup> That the Greeks maintained control at least of the sanctuary's finances, and that they saw the sanctuary of Eryx as belonging to Aphrodite at this period is manifest in Thucydides 4.46.3. Here the Egestans brought the Athenian ambassadors, "Leading them to the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Eryx they revealed the dedications, phiales and wine jugs and incense burners and quite a bit of other goods." The cult of Erycine Aphrodite remained strong, transforming into the cult of Erycine Venus in the Roman period. The references to Ashtart of Eryx as late as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE (see above) indicate that the cult was simultaneously recognized as belonging to Ashtart (among the Semitic populations at least) and Aphrodite (among the Greek), if not also the as-yet unnamed Elymian goddess whose cult may have been present before the arrival of the Phoenicians.<sup>101</sup> Clearly, an Ashtart-Aphrodite syncretism of the *interpretatio* variety is in place. It would appear that the (Cypro-)Phoenicians brought the cult of their dominant goddess with them in the establishment of a new colony, much as at Kition centuries before. By the time of the Greek absorption of most of Sicily in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the tendency was already well-established by the Greeks that all Near Eastern (great) goddesses were simultaneously Aphrodite. Thus, the translation of the Ashtart cult at Eryx to an Aphrodite cult is hardly surprising.

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<sup>98</sup> *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, s.v. Eryx.

<sup>99</sup> Bonnet 1996:163, #O16.

<sup>100</sup> Serrati 2000:12.

<sup>101</sup> Pirenne-Delforge 1994:257.

However, this does not mean that such *interpretatio* syncretisms were inevitable. One need only look north, to the sanctuary at Pyrgi, to see a counter example. The sanctuary established here no later than the 6<sup>th</sup>-century, as per the earliest archaeological remains of the older temple, was dedicated to the Etruscan goddess Uni, queen of the pantheon, later the Roman Juno. Architectural sculptures relating tales from the Trojan Cycle, as well as copious Greek influence in the architecture itself, indicate a Greek influence at the site during the construction of the 6<sup>th</sup>- and 5<sup>th</sup>-century temples. The most famous epigraphic data from the site are the 5<sup>th</sup>-century bilingual *lamelles d'or*, dedicated by Tiberius Velianas, King of Caere. These three leaves, one in Phoenician, one Etruscan, one bilingual, are dedications to Uni-Ashtart, goddess of the sanctuary.<sup>102</sup> It is likely that the sanctuary was primarily dedicated to the Etruscan Uni. However, when pressure from Greeks and Romans encouraged the forging of closer alliances between Etruscans and Carthaginians, Tiberius Velianas opened the door to a multi-ethnic interpretation of the sanctuary. Or, more simply put, he recognized an *interpretatio* syncretism between the queen goddess of the Etruscan pantheon — Uni — and the queen deity of the Phoenicio-Carthaginians — Ashtart.

This in no way encouraged the introduction of an Aphrodite/Turan cult at Pyrgi. As stated above, Greek influence was apparent at the sanctuary since the construction of the earlier, 6<sup>th</sup>-century temple. The Greek goddesses most closely associated with the sanctuary, though, were Eileithyia and Leukothea. Eileithyia was probably syncretised to Uni through their common concern for matters of childbirth; Leukothea may reflect the presence of the Etruscan goddess Thesan, goddess of the rising sun.<sup>103</sup>

While the Greeks were equating Aphrodite with Near Eastern goddesses, they do not appear to have been doing the same for the Etruscan. The sanctuary at Pyrgi was founded first by Etruscans without reference to Phoenicians or Carthaginians, so there would be

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<sup>102</sup> Bonnet 1996:121; Ridgway 1990:519.

<sup>103</sup> Ridgway 1990:529.



no reason to expect Aphrodite. Quite to the contrary, we should be surprised that there were no references to Hera. When the Etruscans opened the door to closer relations with their Phoenician neighbors, they equated the queens of their own pantheons, with no need to bring Aphrodite into the picture, even in later times.

The examples of Eryx and Pyrgi are indicative of the rather casual syncretism that existed between Ashtart and Aphrodite outside of Cyprus. The Greeks did tend to equate near Eastern goddesses, including Ashtart, with Aphrodite. When finding a Near Eastern goddess cult, as they did at Eryx, the Greeks tended to translate the cult as belonging to Aphrodite. However, the presence of such a near Eastern goddess, even Ashtart, would not automatically lead to an Aphrodite translation, especially if alternate Greek deities were already recognized at a site. Thus, the introduction to Ashtart at Pyrgi did not lead to an Aphrodite cult. Likewise, the Phoenicians were inclined to equate the queen of their pantheon with other queens. On Cyprus, of course, this was the Wanassa, the Paphian Queen. Elsewhere, though, this could be Isis, the Mistress of Byblos, or Uni. The syncretism between Aphrodite and Ashtart, in the end, is general at best. The most consistent syncretism appears to be the identification of queen deities with other queens.

### *Final Thoughts: The Specter of Hera*

According to Pausanias (3.8.8–9), in Lakonia

There is a sanctuary of Hera Hyperkheiria made according to an oracle when the Eurotas greatly overflowed their land. The old *xoanon* they call Aphrodite Hera; it has been held customary that mothers sacrifice to this deity upon the marriage of a daughter.

In both Sparta and her colony at Taras/Taranto, Aphrodite was worshipped under the epithet “Basilis,” meaning “Queen,”<sup>104</sup> just as she was regarded as the “Wanassa” at Paphos. In several locations, Aphrodite was worshiped conjointly with Zeus, possibly as his consort. At Istros on the Black Sea, not far from where we have our earliest

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<sup>104</sup> Bonnet and Pirenne-Delforge 1999:265; Schindler 1998:147 and 151.

reference to “Syrian Aphrodite,” Aphrodite and Zeus shared a joint cult and altar from the Archaic Age.<sup>105</sup> At Paros, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century at the latest, Zeus was worshiped as “Zeus Aphrodisios,” either the consort or male manifestation of the goddess.<sup>106</sup> On Hellenistic Delos, Zeus, either as the “Ouranian” or as syncretized to the Syrian god Hadad, was worshipped alongside Aphrodite, as “Palestinian Ashtarte Ouranian Aphrodite” in ID 2305 (see above), or as the Hagnê Aphrodite/Theos/Atargatis. As discussed above, the inscriptions from Delos make it clear that Aphrodite was the equivalent of Atargatis (as well as Ashtart, Isis, etc.) in the Delian inscriptions. However, Lucian, in his *De Dea Syria*, argues that it was, in fact, not Aphrodite but Hera who was the Syrian Goddess, just as Zeus was the Syrian God Hadad.<sup>107</sup>

It is evident that there is some strong connection between Aphrodite and Hera in their cults throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. Pirenne-Delforge has suggested that this may be due to a slight syncretism between the two goddesses in the early introduction of Aphrodite’s cult into the Aegean, when the “new” goddess of sex absorbed some of the traits of the well-entrenched goddess of marriage.<sup>108</sup> However, when we consider the ties that bind these goddesses not only to each other, but to the Near Eastern goddesses as well, perhaps a different dynamic comes into focus. As stated above, Ashtart was a queenly goddess in the Phoenician pantheon, the eastern equivalent of Paphian Aphrodite, or, more commonly, Greek Hera. She was the consort of various Phoenician king gods throughout the Phoenician territories, such as Melqart and Eshmun, just as Hera was consort of Zeus. Perhaps the commonalities between Aphrodite and Hera can be understood as resulting from a perceived henotheistic syncretism between these two goddesses and the queenly goddesses of the Near East. Could the Aphrodite = Ashtart/Atargatis = Queen = Hera ideology

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<sup>105</sup> Budin 2003:101.

<sup>106</sup> *IG*, XII, 5.220.

<sup>107</sup> Oden 1977:47–53.

<sup>108</sup> Pirenne-Delforge 2001:186–87.

have caused a minor merging of the Greek goddesses? This is certainly possible. As we have seen, the syncretism between Aphrodite and Ashtart is hardly exclusive, either on the Greek or Phoenician sides. Both populations saw various equivalents of their own goddesses in the pantheons of the other. If an Aphrodite = Ashtart/Atargatis = Queen = Hera dynamic occurred over the miles and ages of Greek religion, we should not wonder if Hera and Aphrodite occasionally switched roles, one functioning as the consort of Hadad/Zeus at one time; the other, another. One serving as Syrian Queen in the Hellenistic period, the other in the Roman. It becomes clear that in this study of Near Eastern-Greek/Aphrodite-Ashtart syncretisms, the role of Hera must be appreciated for how the Greek divine queen mitigated the perceived syncretisms between Aphrodite and the Near Eastern goddesses, and how those perceived syncretism affected both her own cults and those of Aphrodite.

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# COMPARING SECTARIAN PRACTICE AND ORGANIZATION: THE QUMRAN SECTS IN LIGHT OF THE REGULATIONS OF THE SHAKERS, HUTTERITES, MENNONITES AND AMISH

EYAL REGEV

## *Summary*

This article tries to demonstrate that the unique regulations of the Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) sect are derived from its social character as a sect, not from scriptural exegesis or Hellenistic influence. In order to achieve this goal, the article introduces practices that are typical of introversionist sects, and shows that they can also be found in Qumran. Thus the evidence from Qumran contributes to the understanding of the sectarian practices and organization in general. The article compares the regulations from Qumran to those of the Shakers, the Hutterites, the Mennonites and the Amish and also makes inferences concerning the practices of these different sects.

The comparison pertains to the procedures of joining the sect, admission to adulthood, annual or semi-annual ceremonial communions, sanctions and punishments, confessions, economical organization and organizational patterns, especially the tendency of keeping the local community small, as well as gender relations and social hierarchy within the sect.

## *Introduction*

Modern study of comparative sectarianism focuses primarily on ideological aspects, religious and sociological, of sectarianism. But is it also possible to draw general lines for sectarian regulations and organizational structure? May evidence of certain sectarian practices illuminate the rules and structure of other sects? The present study approaches these questions, suggesting some possible analogies between modern Christian sects and an ancient Jewish sect.

The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in eleven caves near Wadi Qumran in 1947–1955 document the history, religion and social life of a sectarian Jewish movement whose members lived in Judaea in ca. 150 bce – 70 ce. This movement was composed of two distinctive sectarian branches that shared the same theology and used the same unique ter-

minologies for most of their institutions and regulations, but differed in features of the social organization. The *yahad* community lived in the Judean desert, in Khirbet Qumran, near the caves. Its members owned communal property, lived in isolation from the outside society and were apparently celibate. The regulations of this community were documented in its manual of discipline, usually known as the *Community Rule*. The members of the *community of the renewed covenant in the land of Damascus* (hereafter: The Damascus Covenant) lived in scattered small “colonies” (*mahanot*) in rural areas, and possibly in urban areas as well. In comparison to the *yahad* group, members of the Damascus Covenant maintained rather permeable boundaries between themselves and the outside world. They maintained private property, they married and raised children. Records of this latter community’s admonitions and regulations, known as the *Damascus Document*, were discovered in the Cairo Geniza (1898) and in the Qumran caves.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the scrolls discovered in Qumran are self-portraits of the most ancient sects ever documented, and thus may shed light on the phenomenon of (ancient) sectarianism. Therefore, it is surprising that,

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<sup>1</sup> L.H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1994, 97–112, 127–33; C. Hempel, “Community Structures in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Admission, Organization, Disciplinary Procedures,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years*, ed. P.W. Flint and J.C. Vanderkam, Leiden: Brill 1999, 2:77–92; S. Metso, “Constitutional Rules at Qumran,” *ibid.* 1:186–210. Admittedly, recent publication of *Damascus Document* manuscripts from cave 4 indicates a very complex textual (and social!) history of the texts of these two branches. Thus, the differences that will be pointed to above may have been changed over the years. For the editions of the *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document* see: *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations. Vol. 1: The Rule of the Community and related Documents*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck and Louisville: John Knox 1994; *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations. Vol. 2: Damascus Document, War Scroll and Related Texts*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck and Louisville: John Knox 1995; J.M. Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4: Vol. XIII. The Damascus Document (4Q266–273)* (Discoveries in the Judean Desert 18), Oxford: Clarendon 1996. The problem of the historical and social relationship between the two branches will be discussed towards the end of the article (see the references in n. 85).

to date, students of religion and anthropology have not studied the Qumran sectarians, nor have students of Qumran directed attention to the study of the scrolls from the perspective of comparative sectarianism. A notable exception is Albert Baumgarten's *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation*,<sup>2</sup> in which a sociological approach is applied to the evidence of Jewish sects, especially Qumran. Baumgarten explained several social and historical features of ancient Jewish sectarianism in light of analogies from 17<sup>th</sup> century England regarding millennial/messianic beliefs, literacy, urbanization and political developments. Whereas Baumgarten studied these general social phenomena, I would like to focus on more limited as well as more practical aspects of sectarianism: boundary maintenance, punishment or exclusion of deviant members, hierarchical structure and organizational patterns.<sup>3</sup>

Existing scholarship on sectarianism focuses primarily on the ideological aspects. I believe, however, that a comparative analysis of sectarian laws as well as sectarian organization structure may shed light on hitherto undiscovered aspects of the Qumran sectarians. Based on the sociological theory of sectarianism, the present study aims to draw several inferences — subject to the limitations of comparison and analogy-based research<sup>4</sup> — regarding the Qumran sectarians, using a compara-

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<sup>2</sup> Journal for the Study of Judaism: Suppl. 55; Leiden: Brill 1997. See also the popular Hebrew version: *Second Temple Sectarianism: A Social and Religious Historical Essay*, Jerusalem: Ministry of defense 2001.

<sup>3</sup> A comparison between the *Community Rule* and Greek associations was introduced by M. Weinfeld, *The Organizational Pattern of the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect: A Comparison with Guilds and Religious Associations of the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (NTOA 2), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1986. Weinfeld, however, focused on parallelism without using social theory or the perspective of comparative religion regarding sectarianism — indeed, it is sociologically inadequate to compare a sect with a guild or a denomination — and his conclusions were mistakenly interpreted (cf. n. 8 below).

<sup>4</sup> See, F. Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," rpt. in *High Points in Anthropology*, ed. P. Bohannon and M. Glazer, 2nd ed., New York 1988, 85–93.

tive analysis of regulations and the organizational structure, with other ideologically-similar sects. To examine Qumranic practices and rules, the present study employs insights about several North American sects, which are possibly the most comprehensively documented and studied sects of all: the Shakers, the Hutterites, the Mennonites and the Amish.<sup>5</sup>

All these five movements (Qumran sectarians, Shakers, Hutterites, Mennonites and Amish) are identified as sectarian movements, and primarily as introversionist sects, that is, their members share a common ideology and sense of self-identity. Introversionist sects share a group of ideological and social elements, referred to below as “the sectarian setting.” Similar to all sects, these five are voluntary associations which emphasize their exclusiveness and are characterized by hostility to the world outside the sect. Membership is attained on the basis of confirmation, by the sect’s authorities, of a personal merit (*viz.* conversion experience). As introversionist sects, they demand the fullest possible withdrawal from the world and thus create separated communities preoccupied with their own holiness and insulation from the general society. Their aim is to cope with the evilness of the world and

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<sup>5</sup> The Shakers (“shaking Quakers”) were officially called “The United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing.” The movement was formed in England in the mid-eighteenth century and consolidated under the leadership of “Mother” Ann Lee. Its core members emigrated to New York in the 1770’s. The Mennonites (named for Menno Simons), Hutterites (named for Jacob Hutter) and Amish (named for Jacob Ammann) are remnant branches of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement that emerged early in the sixteenth century in Central Europe, as a radical reform movement opposing the ideological compromise of the Protestant Reformation. The Mennonites were formed in Switzerland and the Netherlands, whereas the Hutterites emerged in the Austrian Empire. The Amish are descendants of a religious division among the Swiss Anabaptist Mennonites in the late seventeenth century. All immigrated to North America in several waves during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Hutterites, Mennonites and Amish are still flourishing, whereas the Shakers have almost disappeared. It should be noted that the Mennonites and Amish have many different branches. See C. Redekop, *Mennonite Society*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press 1989, 30–44. The following discussion mainly focuses on the “Old Mennonite Church” and “Old Order Amish.”

attain ultimate salvation.<sup>6</sup> My basic contention is that these sects, sharing a similar general socio-religious introversionist ideological pattern *may* also share some practical aspects of daily life and socialization. Therefore, studying the rules of the Qumran sectarians in relation to the Anabaptists and the Shakers, may enable us to identify the Qumranic regulations that highlight a sectarian way of life and define the particular social character of these practices.

My aims in these comparisons are threefold: (1) To show that some of the regulations of the *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant were, in fact, common to additional sects and may therefore be identified as el-

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<sup>6</sup> For the definition of a sect see B. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," *American Sociological Review* 24 (1959), 3–15. For the identification of all Anabaptist Mennonites movements as sects, see Redekop, *Mennonite Society*, 35. For the classification of introversionist sects, see Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," and especially idem, *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological study of Religious Movements of Protest Among Tribal and Third-World Peoples*, London: Heinemann 1973, 18–30. Wilson (*Magic and the Millennium*, 26 n. 18) classified the Shakers as introversionists, whereas J. McKelvie Whitworth, *God's Blueprints: A Sociological Study of Three Utopian Sects*, London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1975, 6, argued that they fit the definition of utopian sect. Contemporary Mennonite Brethren do not fully fit the introversionist category and the above description of religious ideology. Cf. P.M. Hamm, *Continuity and Change Among the Canadian Mennonite Brethren*, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1987, 255–56. For the Qumran community as an introversionist sect, see Baumgarten, *Flourishing*, 13–15, and P.F. Esler, "Introverted Sectarianism at Qumran and in the Johannine Community," in idem, *The First Christians in their Social World: Social Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation*, London and New York: Routledge 1994, 70–91 (at 79–84) regarding the *yahad*. For its sectarian world-view see E. Regev, "Abominated Temple and A Holy Community: The Formation of the Notions of Purity and Impurity in Qumran," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 10:2 (2003), 243–78. Esler, "Introverted Sectarians," 76–79, regarded the Damascus Covenant not as a sect but as a reform movement (or a premature sect) since it is not as separatist as the *yahad*. However, I think that there are several ideological and behavioral sectarian-introversionist markers in the *Damascus Document* (see, e.g., J.M. Baumgarten, "'The Sons of Dawn' in CDC 13:14–15 and the ban on Commerce among the Essenes," *Israel Exploration Journal* 33 (1983), 81–85). This will be attested to by the similarities between the Damascus Covenant and the Shakers and especially the Amish.

ements in a sectarian pattern of behavior. If so, we could conclude that the basic source of inspiration for Qumran sectarians' communal rules and organization was a sectarian setting, rather than scriptural exegesis of the Torah<sup>7</sup> or external (*viz.* Hellenistic) influence.<sup>8</sup> The same conclusion may also pertain to the origin and function of these practices among the Anabaptists and the Shakers: the comparison with Qumran will emphasize the general sectarian character of particular phenomena since it will be shown that they are common among different introversionist sects. (2) To point to quasi-parallels and dissimilarities between the Qumran regulations or organizational patterns and those of North American sects. The relatively small differences may enable to identify particular sectarian social characteristics in Qumran and to clarify functions in the sectarian social system. They will also stress the differences between the *yahad* community and the Damascus Covenant. Such comparisons of organizational patterns and other regulations will

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<sup>7</sup> As argued by P.R. Davies, "Halakhah at Qumran," in *idem, Sects and Scrolls* (SFSHJ 134), Atlanta: Scholars Press 1996, 113–27; A. Shemesh, "The Origins of the Laws of Separatism: Qumranic Literature and Rabbinic Halacha," *Revue de Qumrân* 18 (1997), 223–41; *idem*, "Expulsion and Exclusion in the Community Rule and the Damascus Document," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 9 (2002), 44–74. Therefore, I conclude that the Qumranic communal regulations were modeled after biblical exegesis only in order to portray them as divine rules or heavenly revelations.

<sup>8</sup> As argued by B.W. Dombrowski, "Yahad in 1QS and to koinon: An Instance of Early Greek and Jewish Synthesis," *HTR* 59 (1966) 293–307; M. Klinghardt, "The Manual of Discipline in the Light of Statutes of Hellenistic Associations," in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site*, ed. M.O. Wise et al. (ANYAS 722), New York: New York Academy of Sciences 1994, 251–70, who draws on Weinfeld, *Organizational Pattern*. For a general attempt to trace Hellenistic influences on Qumran's theology, see M. Hengel, "Qumran und der Hellenismus," in *Qumrân: Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu*, ed. M. Delcor, Paris-Gembloux: Duculot, and Leuven: University Press, 1978, 333–72. For the differences between the Damascus Covenant and Greco-Roman *collegia*, see S. Walker-Ramisch, "Greco-Roman Voluntary Associations and the Damascus Document: A Sociological Analysis," *Voluntary Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. J.S. Kloppenborg and S.G. Wilson, London and New York: Routledge 1996, 132–42, who noted (p. 141) that sectarian ideology and exclusive membership were uncharacteristic of the *collegia*.

also uncover differences within the North American sects themselves. (3) To present a preliminary and tentative clarification of certain obscure or puzzling practices and phenomena in the scrolls by pointing to more detailed, or partial parallels, in other sectarian organizations.<sup>9</sup>

### *Admission into the Sect*

One of the most important characteristics of a movement is the manner in which it selects its members. Sectarian societies tend to screen converts in order to prevent later defections or disobedience. The *yahad* community demanded a complicated process of admission that lasted more than two years: (1) Examination of the candidate for membership by a sectarian official. This stage probably included a physical examination of his body, determining whether the candidate is a Son of Light/Truth or Son of Darkness/Evil.<sup>10</sup> (2) Approval of his candidacy by the community's assembly. (3) One year of conditional membership during which the candidate may not touch "purities," probably solid food. (4) An additional examination by the assembly. (5) A second year of candidacy in which he was still prohibited from coming in contact with liquid food and perhaps also ritual baths. (*Community Rule* 6:14–23). However the *Damascus Document* (15:5–13) only demanded that the candidate would vow loyalty to the covenant's law following an examination by the sect's overseer.

Some parallels to the *yahad*'s screening process can be found among the Shakers. In their earliest days, the Shakers used to practice a physical examination of the candidate, including touching. Then they

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<sup>9</sup> For such ethnographic analogies of interpreting ancient culture in light of contemporary or early modern civilizations see, e.g., I. Hodder, *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology*, Worcester: Cambridge University Press 1986, 99, 144–45, 156–57; J. Marcus and K.V. Flannery, "Ancient Zapotec Ritual and Religion: an Application of the Direct Historical Approach," in *The Ancient Mind*, ed. C. Renfrew and E.B. Zubrow, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994, 55–74.

<sup>10</sup> See Y. Licht, "Legs as Signs of Election," *Tarbiz* 35 (1965), 18–26 [Hebrew]. Cf. P.S. Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. 3:1, revised and edited by G. Vermes et al., Edinburgh; T&T Clark 1986, 342–47, 364–66.



stated the Shaker's doctrine, e.g., the millennial dispensation before the candidate. Those who were deemed ready were introduced to more esoteric doctrines such as the need to confess to the leaders, the condemnation of marriage as sinful, and the idea of progress through degrees of punishments.<sup>11</sup> New converts were required to leave behind the pollution of the outside world by confessing their sins.<sup>12</sup> Shaker novices continued to work outside but were privileged to worship with the other novices and elders.<sup>13</sup> They were also permitted to retain their property in their probation period (see below). Hence, in both sects the admission of new members was selective and gradual, although the *yahad's* was more rigorous, since novices were not fully integrated into religious life in the first two years. I believe that this common pattern derived from the fact that their existence depended on new members (see below the discussion of celibacy). The integrity of the converts was crucial to their social and spiritual development.

Gradual, but less selective admission is practiced by the Amish and Hutterites. The Amish demand a period of time before taking new members into full fellowship.<sup>14</sup> The admission into the Hutterites is similar to the *yahad's* economic process of admission (the Hutterites also share common property, see below): A novice in the *yahad* community retained his own property in his first year of probation (in stage 4). When he was accepted to the second and final year (stage 5), his property and production would be taken over by the authority of the sect's overseer. After this second year (if he was finally accepted) his property and production would finally be integrated into

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<sup>11</sup> S.J. Stein, *The Shaker Experience in America*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1992, 16. A rigorous screening process similar to the *yahad's* is attested to in the *Apostolic Tradition* (attributed to a third century Roman church). See T.M. Finn, "Ritual Process and Survival of early Christianity: A Study of the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 3 (1989), 69–89.

<sup>12</sup> T.E. Johnson, "The 'Millennial Laws' of 1821," *The Shaker Quarterly* 7:2 (1967), 37; Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 96.

<sup>13</sup> Mckelvie Whitworth, *God's Blueprints*, 25.

<sup>14</sup> J.A. Hostetler, *Amish Society*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1968, 61.

the community's.<sup>15</sup> As for the Hutterites, a convert who asks to be accepted into the Hutterite Brethren (quite a rare occasion, since the Hutterite are not missionaries) has to live in the community a year or longer as a candidate in order to study their doctrine. During this period his property remains his own. After that stage he is accepted, if the congregation agrees that he qualifies, and his property is transferred to the community.<sup>16</sup> Here too the parallelism is not complete, since the *yahad* is more selective and cautious in transferring foreign property, declaring such property as sinful and polluting (*Community Rule* 5:15–20).

The similarities in the process of accepting new members show that gradual admission is typical of sectarian organizations, especially introversionist sects. In view of all these examples, however, the openness of the Damascus Covenant in accepting new members without a thorough examination or probation period is quite exceptional. One may suspect that this trend was derived from its missionary character and motivation.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the Damascus Covenant was much less introversionist than the *yahad* (this is apparent in light of their attitudes towards marriage and private property, as noted above), and in this case also less introversionist than the Shakers, Hutterites and Amish.

### *Admission to Adulthood*

According to the *Damascus Document* as well as other texts from Qumran, at the age of twenty affiliated persons had to perform a certain ritual in order to become full members. The ritual process was called “passing among those who are mustered” (*pekudim*) and included a

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<sup>15</sup> *Community Rule* 6:17–23. A case of transferring an estate and a slave of a new member(?) to the *yahad* is attested to in ostraca recently discovered in Khirbet Qumran. See F.M. Cross and E. Eshel, “Ostraca from Khirbet Qumran,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 47 (1997), 17–28.

<sup>16</sup> V. Peters, *All Things Common: The Hutterian Way of Life*, New York: Harper & Row 1965, 179–80. For the lack of missionary motivation see *ibid.* 78.

<sup>17</sup> On the missionary character of the Damascus Covenant see P.R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, Sheffield: JSOT Press 1982; J. Murphy O'Connor, “The Essenes and their History,” *Revue Biblique* 81 (1974), 215–244.

half Shekel payment as atonement for one's soul.<sup>18</sup> There is no explicit description of the ceremony, but it is probable that it was performed at the annual communion covenant ceremony (on which, see below). Thus, young members made their first vow of faithfulness when the others renewed their commitment to the group. How and why did this ceremony originate? What was its function in community life? Parallel rituals practiced by all Anabaptist sects may shed some light on these questions.

The admission ceremony of baptism on confession of faith was one of the causes for the Anabaptist departure from Protestantism in the Reformation revolution, as attested to in their common name—*Anabaptists*.<sup>19</sup> The Hutterites' admission of young members (19–26 years old) is performed through baptism, by a voluntary request of the baptized person. Only after baptism can he or she participate in daily rituals. Baptism is usually performed once a year on Palm Sunday or Pentecost. The candidate is baptized only when the whole colony agrees, and after an instruction period in which he or she has demonstrated obedience and commitment, and then has been examined in great detail. The sermon of baptism concerns repentance, rebirth and the discipline of the church, as well as a vow of complete commitment to the Lord.<sup>20</sup> Amish who reach adulthood are also baptized, but not before they are instructed for several weeks by the ministers regarding the rules of the church. Then they become full members in

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<sup>18</sup> For the minimum age of twenty of the one who is "passing among those who are mustered," see *Damascus Document* 9:23–10:2 (minimal age for testimony); 1QS<sup>a</sup> 1:9–11 (minimal age for sexual relations and matrimony that is anticipated in the messianic age). Initiation to adulthood was probably not practiced by the *yahad* that may have consisted of only adult males. According to the *Damascus Document* 15:16–17 a juvenile cannot enter the covenant. For the half-Shekel payment see: 4Q159 Ordinances<sup>a</sup>; *Temple Scroll* 39:8–11; J. Liver, "The Half-Shekel in the Scrolls of the Judean Desert Sect," *Tarbiz* 31 (1961), 18–22 [Hebrew].

<sup>19</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 49, 51–52. See also n. 22 below.

<sup>20</sup> J.A. Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press 1974, 235–37, 337–38.

the congregation. Baptism is performed only once a year preceding the fall communion service.<sup>21</sup>

The idea that lies behind these admissions to adulthood is similar: membership is a spiritual merit, and cannot be attained automatically. Although it is truly hoped that all youngsters will become members, they should be examined and prepared for this religious vocation. A special ritual is necessary in order to elevate them to a degree of sanctification. A demand for self-preparation and consciousness for religious commitment is characteristic of sectarian movements.<sup>22</sup> In this case, I believe, the example from Qumran elucidates the Anabaptist concept of admission to adulthood as typical of (or at the very least, associated with) the sectarian ideology of spirituality and sanctification. It is also one of the markers of separation from the surrounding religious community.

It seems that there are certain similarities between the Qumranic and Hutterian or Amish initiation rites. Both the sectarians of the *Damascus Document* and the Amish seem to associate the final initiation rite with the annual (or semi-annual) communion ceremony (cf. 4Q270 7i–ii 16–20). The content of the Hutterian initiation resembles the Qumranic communion ceremony (*Community Rule* 1:16–3:12, on which see also below): the commitment referred to repentance, atonement, discipline concerning the groups' orders, as well as to its purity restrictions. However, there is no evidence that the Qumranic communion included ritual baptism (although its members immersed very often). The procedure and content of Qumranic admission to adulthood are unknown, but due to general similarities noted above, it is possible

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<sup>21</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 51–58, 113. In certain Amish communities, youngsters are nowadays freed of normal restrictions to try out the outside world for a two- or three-year-period around age 18. At the end of this period most of them choose to live as Amish. Thus, the Amish duplicate for the next generation, born into the movement, the membership by choice of prior generations.

<sup>22</sup> For baptism as symbolizing spiritual rebirth or initiation and for the Anabaptist schism concerning adult baptism, see: M. Meslin, "Baptism," *Encyclopedia of Religion* 2:59–63; C.J. Dyck, "Anabaptism," *ibid.* 1:247–49.

that they included some of the components found in the Hutterian parallel; namely, that it was performed after instruction or examination and decision made by the adult members.

### *Sanctions and Punishments*

Daily life in a sect has a sense of discipline. Members are committed to a certain ideology as well as practical commands. But not every member is able or ready for such a demanding commitment, and deviance or disobedience is just a matter of time. Transgression endangers the cohesion of the sect, and the manner in which it responds to internal treats testifies to its social structure and religious belief. Detailed penal codes are found in the *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document*. A comparison with sanctions and punishments of other sects may clarify their social function and also emphasize their uniqueness.

#### Excluding transgressors from meetings and rituals

The penal codes of the *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document* order three types of punishments: (1) Expulsion was used in cases such as informing outsiders about the sect, voicing complaints about its teaching, and betrayal of the sect. (2) Exclusion/separation from full membership, preventing the member from participating in meetings or communal sect meals. This was the penalty for lying about financial issues or gossiping about other members. (3) Rationing of food supply, by a fourth or even a half, for a period of several days, months or even a year or two. This was the most lenient and common type of punishment and was used in cases such as improper behavior in the council of the community, answering one's fellow with stubbornness, addressing him impatiently, or bearing a grudge. There were also many combinations of the second and third types, applied in cases such as a member who fell asleep in the assembly of the *rabbim*, or for "one whose spirit swerves from the authority of the Community by dealing treacherously with the truth and by walking in the stubbornness of his heart, if he re-

turns (i.e. repents).”<sup>23</sup> Parallels to the first and second penalties as well as to some of the offences are attested to in other sectarian movements. These parallels will show that sects tend to enforce discipline by using several common sanctions, and will thus clarify the social background to the Qumranic penal code.

Quite similar list of offences and exclusion from the sect’s cultic occupations as a result of immoral behavior are characteristic of the Shakers, Hutterites and Amish. According to the Shakers’ “Millennial Laws” (1821), believers who engage in “tattling, talebearing and backbiting” are excluded from worship until their confession. Those who take part in “conversation which tends to excite lustful sensations . . . stand behind all” in the worship of God until their confession. The same applies to one who shows anger towards another member, hurts his or her feelings, or irritates him or her.<sup>24</sup>

In case of continuous transgressions, the Hutterites excommunicate the member, and thus he or she may neither eat with others nor participate in work and the colony’s daily life, but would not be expelled.<sup>25</sup> In general, the Hutterites tolerate deviance among adolescent members. Such transgressors are physically punished or being publicly shamed by the ministers or the colony’s council, but are not deprived of food, work or self-respect.<sup>26</sup> In case of a serious misdemeanor, the delinquent may appear before the congregation at the end of the church service to voice contrition. The most extreme sanction is avoidance or

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<sup>23</sup> *Community Rule* 7:18–21. For discussion of the penal codes see: L.H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony and Penal Code* (BJS 33), Chico CA: Scholars Press 1983, esp. 155–90; idem, *Law, Custom and Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar 1993, 240–67 [Hebrew]; C. Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document* (STJD 29), Leiden: Brill 1998, 141–48, 163–70.

<sup>24</sup> Johnson, “Millennial Laws,” 46. On the force of evil that threatened to contaminate the Believers, and the endeavor to maintain purity inside the society, see Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 96.

<sup>25</sup> Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, 245.

<sup>26</sup> Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, 289–90.

shunning, *Meidung* (on which see also further below).<sup>27</sup> Amish members who are known to be guilty of minor offences but who do not confess are punished by “getting set back from communion,” meaning that they cannot participate in the communion ceremony.<sup>28</sup>

Interestingly, there is no equivalent to the Qumranic reduction of food. This penalty is unique to the *yahad*. What urged the *yahad*’s members to create this odd punishment of “slight torture” and to use it so frequently? Why were their members willing to endure such odd laws every time they strayed a little bit from the ideal behavior to which they were committed? More so than other sects, the Qumran members viewed their moral system as the most fundamental foundation of their existence and pursued morality and obedience as much as possible. The penal codes of the *Community Rule* as well as the fragments of the *Damascus Document* from cave 4 in Qumran are very detailed, covering almost every possible social transgression. The Qumran sectarians explained their withdrawal from the world (i.e. the Hasmonean state) as separation from a morally defiled society.<sup>29</sup> They maintained that justice and righteous behavior atone for sin and treachery, and also serves as substitutes for the corrupt sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, they had an outstanding religious motivation for living under oppressing moral and penal codes. I conclude that they used the reduction of food penalty as a “penal liturgy”<sup>31</sup> that substitutes the ritualistic function of atoning sacrifices.

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<sup>27</sup> Peters, *All Things Common*, 158. On the rarity of expulsion from the colony see *ibid.* 160. Note, however, that the Hutterian constitution reserves the right to expel members (*ibid.* 200).

<sup>28</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 120–21.

<sup>29</sup> Regev, “Abominated Temple and A Holy Community.”

<sup>30</sup> *Community Rule* 9:3–5. For an analogy between the communal punishment and the sacrifices of atonement and purgation of sin from the altar, see *Damascus Document* 14:18–19; 4QD<sup>a</sup> 11:1–5; 4QD<sup>e</sup> 7i:15–21; Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4: Vol. XIII. The Damascus Document*, 76–78, 163–66.

<sup>31</sup> For “penal liturgy” and its social function see M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1977.

## Confessing and admonishing

The *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant created a regular procedure for admonishing transgressors. In the course of reproaching, other member(s) drew the transgressor's attention to his (or her) deed in the presence of witnesses, and warned him that he would be punished if he repeated such an act. If one witness testified regarding the first commission of a crime and later on another witness testified that the person committed the same transgression once again, the two witnesses joined together and sufficed to bring the delinquent to trial. Scholars have argued that this legal procedure emerged from an exegesis of Leviticus 19:17–18.<sup>32</sup> However, the parallel regulation of the Shakers shows that admonitions originated due to the sectarian setting.<sup>33</sup>

A Shaker member who discovered a violation of “the law of Christ or any thing contrary to the known doctrine of the gospel . . . is bound to make it known to the Ministry,” or the Elders. Shaker “Laws and Orders” (1860) add that if the member failed to reveal the matter of sin and transgression to the Elders, “they (i.e. the Elders) participate in the guilt and condemnation thereof.” Furthermore, transgressing Shakers performed confessions before assembling for worship, and reproofing led to open “trials.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> J.L. Kugel, “On Hidden Hatred and Open Reproach: Early Exegesis of Leviticus 19:17,” *HTR* 80 (1987) esp. 52–55; A. Shemesh, “Rebuke, Warning and the Obligation to Testify — in Judean Desert Writings and Rabbinic Halakha,” *Tarbiz* 66 (1997), 149–55 [Hebrew]. For a detailed discussion of the practice of admonition see Schiffman, *Sectarian Law* 89–109; idem, *Law, Custom and Messianism*, 185–203.

<sup>33</sup> For admonition as a sectarian institute see Baumgarten, *Flourishing*, 110–12, who noted its evolution as a consequence of a lack of means of enforcement characteristic to established hierarchical society.

<sup>34</sup> T.E. Johnson, “Rule and Orders for the Church of Christ’s Second Appearing,” *The Shaker Quarterly* 11:4 (1971), 148. Compare the orders in *Damascus Document* 9:2–8 and *Community Rule* 5:24–6:1, and especially the danger of the “bearing of sin” already introduced in Leviticus 19:17. In contrast to the Qumranic regulation, in the Shakers’ laws the reprovved person was not allowed to discover the identity of the



Confession was one of the components of a convert's admission into the Damascus Covenant. The convert was supposed to confess his sins against the Torah before he joined the sect and to justify divine punishment of all transgressing Jews (*Damascus Document* 20:27–32). Members also confessed regularly in the annual communion ritual of renewing the covenant (*Community Rule* 1:24–2:1), and confession formulas are cited in the official prayer of the *yahad* (ibid. 11:9–10) as well as in other prayers. Such practices were also significant among the Shakers and Amish.

In his confession, the Shaker convert was required to describe his past life and sins in great detail. Confessions were frequently deemed insincere or insufficient and had to be repeated. Confession was believed to expiate sins and to purify the convert, while symbolizing his rejection of the world and its temptations. The act of confession mortified the convert and so encouraged the development of humility and submissiveness, qualities that the Shaker leaders held as essential for the believers.<sup>35</sup> I suggest that the convert's confession in the *Damascus Document* may have similar spiritual functions. In any case, Shaker members who sinned also had to initiate confessions in "trials" and were prohibited from keeping their transgression covered.<sup>36</sup>

An Amish member confesses either on his or her own initiative or as a procedure of punishing (the latter's function is quite similar to the admonitions discussed above). According to Amish legislation, "church confession is to be made, if practical, where transgression was made. If not, a written request of forgiveness should be made to said [*sic*] church. All manifest sins to be openly confessed before church before being allowed to commune."<sup>37</sup> There are four different levels of confession, depending on the severity of the offense, the

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person who complained about his or her behavior. See Johnson, "Millennial Laws," 46–47.

<sup>35</sup> Mckelvie Whitworth, *God's Blueprints*, 18.

<sup>36</sup> Johnson, "Millennial Laws," 45–46.

<sup>37</sup> "Ordung of a Christian Church" of Amish Church of Pike Country Ohio (1950), cited in Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 61.

strictest leads to a six weeks ban from the congregational meal and fellowship.<sup>38</sup> Shunning (*Meidung*) is the Amish equivalent to the Qumranic expulsion (shunning had great significance in the formation of the Anabaptist and especially the Amish movement). An Amish member would feel helpless coping with isolation from his or her friends and relatives, and therefore would either repent or leave the community.<sup>39</sup>

I conclude that not only in Qumran, but also among the Shakers and Amish confession was not a traditional Christian practice of private repentance. It was a public ritual of social importance that was derived from a special socio-religious ideology and atmosphere characteristic of all these introversionist sects. The common need to confess derives from the pre-supposition that the world and man are sinful and therefore sectarian life aims to attain repentance and atonement. The motivation of these movements to adhere to such strict moral codes stem not only from the call for repentance and atonement in the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, but especially from their sectarian setting: Every transgression may cause severe divine punishment or even doom the individual or the whole group to hell. Only the specific sectarian way of life can save one from the expected horror.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> D.B. Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press 1989, 111–14.

<sup>39</sup> For the practice of shunning and its history, see Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 29–32, 62–65, 241–44, 306–7. For Amish sanctions, confession to the church, excommunication (shunning) and expulsion, see *ibid.* 14.

<sup>40</sup> This point requires further elaboration in light of the theology and history of these movements. For the present purpose I will confine myself to several references. For the Qumranic notion of repentance and atonement of sinful deeds, including the collective violation of the Torah by all the Jews, see, e.g., *Community Rule* 5:1.6–7, 8:6.10, 9:4–5; *Damascus Document* 1:8–9, 3:16–20. The Anabaptists' and Shakers' confession presumably originated from Matt 18:15–17, 1 Tim 5:20. The shunning presumably originated from 1 Cor 5:11, Rom 15:17, 2 Th 3:14, Tit 3:10. For the sectarian "redemptive process," see K. Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities*, New York: Schocken Books 1969, 6–7. For the sectarian "Nature Ephemeral" world-view and way of life see M. Thompson, R. Ellis and

*Community Institutions*

The *yahad's* *Community Rule* (1:16–3:12) begins with the annual ritual of “passage into the covenant” in which members renewed their vow of commitment to the sect. It also included a harsh condemnation of those who lived outside in evilness as well as those who violated their vow. This ritual ceremony was modeled after the biblical covenant ceremony in Deuteronomy 27:11–26 and Joshua 8:30–35.<sup>41</sup> But the biblical model was not the reason that this communal institute was created. Juxtaposition with the Amish communion proves that such a ceremony is necessary for maintaining the unity of the sectarian community.

The Amish parallel to the annual “passage into the covenant” is the semiannual communion that includes associated ceremonies that symbolize the unity of the district’s members. All the members take part in the preparatory service in which the ministers order practices forbidden or discouraged. Each member is asked whether he or she agrees with these orders. Faults are confessed and adjustments are made between members who have differences to settle. Members who have

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A. Wildavsky, *Cultural Theory*, Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press 1990, esp. 25–29. The separation from the world demonstrates the above postulation. *Community Rule* 5:16–17 orders “No one must either eat or drink anything of their (i.e. ‘the men of deceit’) property, or accept anything whatever from their hand without payment. . . .” For the Amish rejection of technology and social acculturation, see J.A. Hostetler, “Persistence and Change Patterns in Amish Society,” *Ethnology* 3 (1964), 185–98. The Shakers and the *yahad* limited contact with outsiders as much as they could. Shaker Millennial Laws order that Believers who stay over one night (or more) outside the Family are obligated to perform a sort of *rite de passage* before they join the community: they should first see the Elders and give them an account of their journey “as it respects their protection and prosperity while absent.” Then they still stand behind all in the spiritual worship — just like transgressing members! — until the elders decide otherwise. See Johnson, “Millennial Laws,” 52. For the sense of impurity of the world compare *Community Rule* 3:5–6 with Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 96.

<sup>41</sup> See the commentary of Y. Licht, *The Rule Scroll*, Jerusalem: Bialik Institute 1965, 51–80 [Hebrew].

been excommunicated are sometimes taken back into the fellowship at this service by kneeling and acknowledging their faults and receiving the right hand of fellowship. The communion ceremony is most important for evaluating personal behavior, achieving unanimity of opinion, and bringing deviating members into conformity (see above for the exclusion from the communion ritual).<sup>42</sup> Thus, I conclude that as in the Amish case, the function of such ceremony for the *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant was to renew and reinforce the commitment to the sect's ideas and to strengthen its solidarity. It is also possible that some of the practical aspects of the Amish communion service existed in the Qumran ritual.

The most important routine institution among the *yahad* as well as the Shakers is the regular meetings (or, in the case of the *yahad*, assemblies), where all collective decisions took place. Shaker members were obligated to attend meetings. This duty seems to parallel *yahad*'s "assembly of the many."<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, both sects prohibited sleeping during the meeting.<sup>44</sup>

### *Leadership, Administration and Hierarchy*

Sectarian leadership and organization may be charismatic or egalitarian, authoritative or democratic, as the following examples will

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<sup>42</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 119–21.

<sup>43</sup> Johnson, "Rules and Orders," 149–50. For fixed hours for the meetings cf. Stein, *The Shaker Experience*, 46. For the Qumranic "assembly of the *rabbim*" (multitude, many), see Hempel, "Community Structure," 75–79. Compare also the ceremony of the preaching service of the Amish congregation every other Sunday (Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 102–3). For the hierarchic character of the "assembly of the *rabbim*," see n. 53 below.

<sup>44</sup> *Community Rule* 7:10; Johnson, "Rules and Orders," 149, 164. Another peculiar parallel can be drawn between the Shaker prohibition of wearing ragged or very dirty clothes into the worship of God (Johnson, "Millennial Laws," 48) and the Qumranic prohibition of wearing such clothes on the Sabbath day (*Damascus Document* 11:3–4).

show.<sup>45</sup> A comparison of the structure of leadership and administration of several sects will clarify their character and function in Qumran. The different types of leadership and administration, as well as the social importance of hierarchy in sectarian organizations will be pointed out as well.

In their early days, the Shakers were led by the charismatic Ann Lee and, in the following generation, by Lucy Wright. Later on, the Shaker Family (i.e. local congregation) was headed by Elders, who took care of the spiritual administration, and deacons, who were responsible for matters of "temporal businesses," namely economics and administration. The general leaders, the highest religious and judicial authority, were the Ministry. These were three or more leaders (both males and females) of the New Lebanon central colony who appointed the Elders and the deacons. One could not apply for the Ministry without notifying the Elders of his or her Family, since the latter mediate between the believer and the Ministry.<sup>46</sup> The structured authority and the distinction between spiritual and temporal responsibilities were firmly established throughout Shaker history.<sup>47</sup>

Shaker bureaucratic leadership was thus carefully structured and hierarchical, especially when it lost its early charisma. However, other sects followed a more democratic and egalitarian model, without any interference from an outside central leadership in the affairs of the local community (actually, in the following cases there is hardly any central leadership at all). The Hutterite colony (*Bruderhof*) is led by a council of seven (in which the head preacher is prominent) that makes all major religious and economic decisions. The council is elected by

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<sup>45</sup> W. Stark, *The Sociology of Religion, A Study of Christendom. Vol. 2: Sectarian Religion*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1967, 115–20, overstated the "anti-authoritarianism" or egalitarian pattern. On hierarchy within sectarian societies, see M. Douglas and A. Wildavski, *Risk and Culture*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1982, 102–25 and *passim*. They maintain that the Hutterites are hierarchical whereas the Amish are egalitarian.

<sup>46</sup> Johnson, "Rule and Orders," 145, 148. Cf. Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 91. On Ann Lee and Lucy Wright, see *ibid*, 18–24, 49–56.

<sup>47</sup> Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 44–45.

the colony's members.<sup>48</sup> Amish congregations are led by a bishop, minister and deacon, nominated by the local members.<sup>49</sup> Among the Mennonite Brethren almost half of the male members serve in leading positions, nominated by the believers in the congregations.<sup>50</sup>

Quite like the Shakers, the leadership and administration of the Damascus Covenant was strictly hierarchic. The *Damascus Document* (1:9–12, 19:33–20:1, 20:27–33) and other writings introduce the sect's founder and first leader, the Teacher of Righteousness. The Teacher had revelations in which he interpreted biblical prophecies, and opened the eyes of the sect's first generation. Most references in the *Damascus Document*, however, pertain to officials called "overseer" (*mebaker*) or "the priest." They were responsible for both spiritual and administrative matters. In the Damascus Covenant judges were responsible for judicial and economic affairs.<sup>51</sup> The *Damascus Document* (14:8–17) also refers to a central "overseer of all the camps" and it is probable that the judges of the movement were also selected from the different scattered communities to serve in the general court of the movement.

In contrast to the Damascus Covenant, the *yahad* was governed by the democratic "assembly of the Many" (*moshav ha-rabbim*) in which all the members participate (*Community Rule* 6:8–13), although certain officials or overseers served in managing positions. This type of administration seem to resemble the Hutterites'. However, the *yahad*'s mode of administration was not entirely egalitarian since there was a certain hierarchy within the assembly (see below). Moreover, in a certain stage in its development, the *yahad* and its assembly were headed by the apocalyptic leadership of "the Sons of Zadok," priests

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<sup>48</sup> Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, 162, 164.

<sup>49</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 13, 86–90.

<sup>50</sup> Hamm, *Continuity and Change*, 105–12.

<sup>51</sup> Another spiritual leader described in the *Community Rule* (9:12–26) and other writings is the *maskil* (sage, wise, or master) whose leading role is unclear. For the different leaders and administrators see: Hempel, "Community Structures," 79–84; N. Jastram, "Hierarchy in Qumran," in *Legal Text and Legal Issues*, ed. M. Bernstein et al. (STDJ 23), Leiden: Brill 1997, 349–76.

who had revelations regarding the legal conduct of the sect.<sup>52</sup> The difference between hierarchical and egalitarian/democratic sects raises interesting questions concerning the origins and functions of these structures, which cannot be further discussed here. However, it is now apparent that the social structure of the two Qumran branches, the *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant is substantially different.

Another pattern of hierarchy, pertaining to the status of the individual member deserves attention. The *yahad* sect had a certain structural hierarchy. Every member who joined the sect was examined by the priests and the lay members and was registered in the Rule in a certain order "according to his spirit, insight and works in the Torah." Someone from a low rank had to obey someone from a higher one. The evaluation of the members was renewed annually, and members were elevated or kept back according to their "perfection of ways." In their work, the low-level member was supposed to obey the high-level member. In their meetings they sat and spoke according to another type of hierarchy, those of priests, Levites and laymen.<sup>53</sup>

Interestingly, the hierarchy of one's spirit and insight is not without parallel. An individual Shaker broadly indicated his standing in the total hierarchy of the sect in terms of his degree of spiritual elevation and commitment to faith. His or her society and Family membership additionally indicated his spatial location within the group.<sup>54</sup> This system of grading provides the most important positive sanction in Shaker life. A person who strictly adhered to the norms of the group

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<sup>52</sup> A.I. Baumgarten, "The Zadokite Priests at Qumran: A Reconsideration," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 4:2 (1997), 137–156 dealt with the problem of managing life according to revelation and noticed the Shaker parallel.

<sup>53</sup> *Community Rule* 5:20–6:11. A genealogical type of hierarchy was practiced in the Damascus Covenant (14:2–6), and to certain extent also in the *yahad*, between priests, Levites, common Israelites and (in the *Damascus Document*) proselytes. See Jastram, "Hierarchy in Qumran."

<sup>54</sup> Mckelvie Whitworth, *God's Blueprints*, 26. The hierarchy of society or Family within the whole Shaker movement slightly resembles the members' hierarchy according to their descent, namely, priests, Levites, layman (*Israel*) and proselytes in Qumran.

would likely win the approval of his elders, and be promoted in its hierarchy to occupy a prestigious and powerful position in the sect, and, most important, in the world to come.<sup>55</sup>

The Shaker parallel enables us to acknowledge the social significance of the spiritual hierarchy for the *yahad*'s sectarian member and how it promoted conformity to the group and its rules. Indeed, the *yahad* could have followed the egalitarian model of the Hutterites (see below), which apparently also encourages social cohesion. Perhaps the *yahad*'s members were too competitive in pursuing spiritual and legal adherence. I suspect that such competitive ethos resulted due to external threats to the group and the danger of defection, and it probably also related to the extensive and rigorous Qumranic penal code discussed above.<sup>56</sup>

### *Economic Communion*

#### Communal property

The evidence from Qumran supports the view that sectarian organizations, especially introversionist sects, tend to maintain communal property and to help associate communities or individuals. The *Community Rule* (1:11–12, 3:2) declares that the *yahad* is to be unified not only in mind, Torah and efforts, but also in property. As was noted above, after the first year of probation the convert's property was registered, but his property and production were integrated only after his fi-

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<sup>55</sup> Mckelvie Whitworth, *God's Blueprints*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> For external and internal threats, see: *Damascus Document* 1:14–18, 8:20, 13:20; 1QpHab 2:1–10, 5:9–12; Murphy O'Connor, "The Essenes and their History." Another possible explanation of the democratic but still hierarchic character of a community is the role of revelation in decision management. Egalitarianism cannot be maintained when some individuals have "spiritual gifts" that affect the sect's conduct. A similar situation is attested among the Meetings of the English Quakers, and it is also worth mentioning that revelation had a special role in the beginnings of the Shaker movement. For the Quakers, see: E. Ischei, "Organization and Power in the Society of Friends, 1852–59," in *Patterns of Sectarianism: Organization and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements*, ed. B.R. Wilson, London: Heinemann 1967, 184–85.



nal acceptance following his second year of probation. The Hutterites<sup>57</sup> and Shakers also lived in communion and share their property.

The Shakers shared food and lodging,<sup>58</sup> and no private property or interest were allowed.<sup>59</sup> They permitted new members to retain their property, perhaps in an attempt to avoid disputes. Only after a period of probation and instruction did a member sign a covenant giving property to the community of which he or she would be a part. If a member later decided to withdraw, he could not get his property back, since it had been consecrated for spiritual purposes.<sup>60</sup> Hence, converts not only renounced all their possessions, but the group benefited from the membership of well to do people. The establishment of Shaker colonies (“villages”) in the early nineteenth century in the West was enabled due to dedications of land by converts. Other Believers then purchased or rented nearby land.<sup>61</sup>

This evidence from the Shakers sheds some light on questions such as how did the colonies of the *yahad*, and perhaps even the more capitalistic Damascus Covenant, purchased and inhabited, or how did the *yahad* acquire the property of its center at Khirbet Qumran.<sup>62</sup>

Mutual economic assistance of different colonies within the movement

The members of the Damascus Covenant possessed their own property. They earned their own living, both in commerce and trade, but were ordered to advise the local overseer in economic matters. Members were forbidden to buy from and sell to fellow members

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<sup>57</sup> The Hutterites define “property” as the right to use, but not to possess it. See Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, 198. Cf. Peters, *All Things Common*, 106–16, 198–99.

<sup>58</sup> Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 17.

<sup>59</sup> Johnson, “Millennial Laws,” 50.

<sup>60</sup> L.J. Siricio, “Inclusive Law, Inclusive Religion, and the Shakers,” *Journal of Church and State* 34 (1992), 571, with bibliography.

<sup>61</sup> Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 62–63.

<sup>62</sup> For land donations to the *yahad* see n. 15 above. Cf. the Essene prohibition of giving away “presents” (including property?) to relatives in Josephus, *Jewish War* II 134 (the Essenes are usually identified with the Qumran sect).

(“Sons of Dawn”), except for “hand in hand,” namely, they were expected to provide the needs of other members on the basis of exchange and mutual trust without seeking profit from commercial relations.<sup>63</sup>

However, the members also contributed certain amounts of their income to the sect. They had to pay a minimum tax of two days’ salary (8 percent) and to give it to the “overseer of the Many (*rabbim*)” and the judges. The money was delivered to the poor and needy, the old and the afflicted persons, captives, young women without supporting relatives or husbands, and helpless youth. All of them were probably the Covenant’s members or somehow related to them (*Damascus Document* 14:12–17; 4Q269 10 i 5–10).

Similar mutual financial aid was common among Shaker and Hutterian colonies.<sup>64</sup> The latter’s mutual aid system included securing loans from other colonies, and intercolony aid (without charge) in cash and produce to colonies in economic distress. Although the Amish do not practice a complete “community of goods,” they are responsible for each other’s welfare and find many ways to come to each other’s aid within a capitalistic society.<sup>65</sup> Like these movements, the members of the Damascus Covenant supported the needy and destitute of the entire movement. Such aid is one of the features of ideological solidarity with remote brethren.

### *Family and Gender*

Both the *yahad* and the Shakers did not marry and renounced the elementary institution of family. The Shakers were celibate, both men and women, whereas the *yahad* members may have been only men. The *Community Rule* does not refer to the matter at all and is usually taken as excluding women from the community.<sup>66</sup> It may be interesting

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<sup>63</sup> *Damascus Document* 13:14–15; Baumgarten, “The Sons of Dawn.”

<sup>64</sup> Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 146; Peters, *All Things Common*, 166–67.

<sup>65</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 145–46.

<sup>66</sup> The Shakers’ Millennial Laws prohibited all private union between the two sexes. See Johnson, “Millennial Laws,” 49–50; idem, “Rule and Orders,” 152–53.

to draw some insight from the Shakers concerning the motives for this peculiar behavior. The Shakers viewed married life and sexuality as “practical evils” and believed that such libidinous indulgences led to criminal practices. Lust corrupted one’s nature and disposition and degraded the dignity of man, and sexual relations were “devilish, beastly and unclean.”<sup>67</sup> In both cases there was a conflict between sect and family, or between spiritual commitment and earthly being. The *yahad* and the Shakers had broadened the “redemptive process” of extreme separation from potential sin and transgression to the realm of family and gender relations, and thus increased their introversion and rejection of the outside world. This subject requires a more thorough examination, with further consideration of the Essenes (some of them were also celibates), the early Christians, and socio-anthropological theories.

### *Communal Organization and Segmentation*

#### Center and periphery: the relationship between colonies

A sect is stereotyped as a community with spatial as well as social density — a group of people that live together. The following discussion, however, will show the complexity of sectarian organizational patterns and especially the tendency to maintain small, even intimate communities. The *Community Rule* and the *Damascus Document* both attest to an organizational pattern of scattered and very small communities of at least ten to fifteen members headed by at least one or three priests or an “overseer” (*mebaker*) (*Community Rule* 6:3–4, 8:1–4;

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The *Damascus Document* 7:6–9, 19:2–3 implicitly refers to the prohibition against marrying in another community, probably the *yahad*. See E. Qimron, “Celibacy in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Two Kinds of Sectarians,” in *The Madrid Qumran Congress* (STDJ 11), ed. J. Trebelle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner, Leiden: Brill 1992, II 287–94. Actually, many scholars assumed that the members of the *yahad* did not take women, since they identified the *yahad* (and the Qumran movement as a whole) with the Essenes that did not marry (Philo, *Hypothetica*, in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* XI 14; Josephus, *Jewish War* II 120, 160–161).

<sup>67</sup> Mckelvie Whitworth, *God’s Blueprints*, 18–19.

*Damascus Document* 12:22–13:2). These were local spatial colonies, in the case of the *yahad*,<sup>68</sup> or religious associations, in the case of the Damascus Covenant, committed to the laws and theology of either the *Community Rule* or the *Damascus Document*. In the case of the *Damascus Document*, each association or community (sg. *mahane*, pl. *mahanot*) had its own local overseer with whom the member consulted regarding commerce, marriage, divorce and the education of the children (4Q266 9 iii 1–7; *Damascus Document* 13:15–19). This overseer was a local spiritual mentor.

The Damascus Covenant had a general overseer “of all the camps” and a general court of judges, but these officials and leaders seem to lack substantial authority. This implies that the local communities of the *Damascus Document* were autonomous. Even the more cohesive *yahad* was divided into small and scattered colonies (“councils”) in different dwellings that retained certain autonomy.<sup>69</sup> How were the local communities united into a coherent movement? Why did their members keep themselves in a manner that weakened their cohesion and perhaps also endangered their social survival? Furthermore, why didn’t the members of the Damascus Covenant share common property (and presumably also dwellings) as their *yahad* brethren? The examination of the organizational pattern of other sects may shed light on these questions.

Not all sectarian movements conform to the familiar model of theocratic organization in which all human life subsumed under the dominion of God, including those aspects that are regularly termed mundane

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<sup>68</sup> *Community Rule* 6:1–2 refers to the members of the communities “in all their dwellings.”

<sup>69</sup> For instance, in a certain stage in the *yahad*’s development new members were joined to the local community without the intervention of the external authority of the assembly (4QS<sup>b</sup> IX 6–8 // 4QS<sup>d</sup> I 5–7). See also the rule pertaining to the local communities (*Community Rule* 6:1–7). This observation and many other concerning the organization and structure of the Qumran communities are discussed in E. Regev, “The *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant: Structure, Organization and Relationship,” *Revue de Qumrân* (forthcoming).

or secular. In some Mennonite communities a commonwealth organizational pattern was established, in which the religious institutions were partly separated from the mundane ones. Other Mennonite communities established a community organizational model in which the members of the congregation are dispersed and not clustered within definable enclaves. Like those of the Damascus Covenant, members of such communities interact more freely with non-Mennonite neighbors and the outside world. Their non-religious aspects of life are under the jurisdiction of the local, regional and national governments, and consequently the congregation's moral control on their secular life diminished. These Mennonite communities created a system of mutual aid, such as health and welfare services.<sup>70</sup>

The Amish live in local bond-like organizations in private households in geographic proximity to the "church district." A congregation ("district") consists of up to forty households, keeping the basic social unit small and indigenous.<sup>71</sup> Largeness would make consensus more difficult.<sup>72</sup> The "church district" or congregation is a ceremonial unit encompassing a specific geographic area within the Amish settlement. It has both ceremonial and institutional functions. Large settlements have many church districts.<sup>73</sup> Households take turns hosting the preaching service. Each church district is self-governing under the leadership of the bishop, although in large settlements there are informal consultations among the different bishops and there are intensive informal contacts between the different districts and settlements.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Redekop, *Mennonite Society*, 78–85. The flexibility of the Mennonite organization led to the evolution of the individualistic model, in which the person has virtually relinquished all identifying traits of membership in the movement and is assimilated into the prevailing mainstream society, although still appreciating Mennonite heritage and beliefs and may attend Mennonite churches (ibid. 86–87).

<sup>71</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 12–13.

<sup>72</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 132, 270–71.

<sup>73</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 71.

<sup>74</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society* 86–90. Note that the Amish's farms are passed from generation to generation through inheritance, and the land is kept as much as possible in the family. See Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 92.

In Shaker colonies, the distance from the leadership in New Lebanon (New York) diminished the influence of its central ministry, and secondary centers were created. Western colonies were subordinated to both New Lebanon and the closer Union Village.<sup>75</sup> The Shaker third phase of formation embraced a structured organization of Families, society or village (two Families), bishopric (two villages) and the center of New Lebanon, the largest village (up to seven families).<sup>76</sup>

For many years there were no formal ties between the three major branches ("Conferences") of Hutterites (Lehrerleut, Dariusleut and Saskatchewan). Legal limitations imposed by the Canadian administrative authorities encouraged the formation of a unified association in 1950, consisting of only Canadian colonies, the Hutterian Brethren Church. The association does not deal with internal organization, but merely common legal issues. Each of these three "Conferences" has its own organization. An annual meeting of all the ministers of each "Conference" of Hutterites discusses mutual problems, and sometimes new regulations are legislated.<sup>77</sup>

Mennonite Brethren convene conference sessions in which delegates from all churches participate. District organizations were founded in Canada and the United States.<sup>78</sup> However, their church policy recognizes congregational autonomy. The local congregation is not always defined geographically but in terms of members of a specific, local church, especially in metropolitan areas.<sup>79</sup>

These four examples of sectarian organization testify to the flexibility of the sectarian governmental structure. In all cases, except the Shakers, the independence of the local community or colony was maintained. Yet, the various divisions sustained their conformity to the general movement and institutions were established in order to keep them relatively uniform. The Shakers, however, pursued and developed their

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<sup>75</sup> Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 90.

<sup>76</sup> Stein, *Shaker Experience*, 133–34.

<sup>77</sup> Peters, *All Things Common*, 165–66. Cf. the Hutterian constitution, *ibid*, 195–98.

<sup>78</sup> Hamm, *Continuity and Change*, 57–58, 108–9.

<sup>79</sup> Hamm, *Continuity and Change*, 108.

hierarchical structure and chain of authority as their movement expanded.

As noted above, in their mundane and day to day routine the Damascus Covenant seems to have followed an autonomous pattern and lacked a central authoritative government. Notwithstanding this, special cases of jurisdiction and internal stress were under the supervision and direction of the “overseer of all camps.” In addition, the judges dealt only with special cases of jurisdiction and the distribution of charity.<sup>80</sup>

Hence, intriguing questions arise: How could such a flexible structure submit to the rigorous penal codes discussed above? Who would carry out the trial and verdict? Is it possible that the Damascus Covenant and the *yahad* were more hierarchical and submissive than the explicit regulations reveal? I conclude that the very detailed penal codes were actually designated to establish jurisprudence that would facilitate judicial procedures in small-scale communities without the external intervention of the judges. These penal laws were enacted without the external intervention of “the overseer of all camps” and the judges. However, in fatal or problematic cases these higher authorities were undoubtedly engaged.

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<sup>80</sup> For the “overseer of all camps” see *Damascus Document* 14:8–17; 4Q255 10 i. For the nomination of the judges see *Damascus Document* 10:4–10; 4Q266 8 iii; 4Q270 6 iv. For their judicial role see *Damascus Document* 9:8–10 (4Q270 6 iv), 16:17–20; *Damascus Document* 15:3–5 (4Q270 6 i); *Damascus Document* 16:17–20. For cases of capital punishment see *Damascus Document* 9:23–10:2 (4Q270 6 iv) and perhaps also *Damascus Document* 9:1–2; 4Q266 8 ii; 4Q270 6 iii. The rules cited here may represent several phases of Qumranic legislation and social formation. For instance, there may be a certain overlap of authorities between the local and the general overseer regarding the acceptance of new members (cf. *Damascus Document* 15:6–15; 4Q266 6 i). For a more elaborated study of the roles and authority of the different overseers and their development throughout time see Regev, “The *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant.” In the case of the *yahad*, the authority of the local communities was more limited, due to the frequent meetings of all the members in the “assembly of the Many” (see above) that coordinated between the different local communities.

### Internal subdivision and branching

This comparison of sectarian organization also reveals a significant social phenomenon. Whether they are communes or voluntary associations, hierarchical or autonomous, flourishing sectarian movements tend to keep their members in small-scale communities. The most distinguishable example is the “branching” of the Hutterite colony. Hutterite colonies form new colonies, called “cell colonies,” when the population reaches a maximal size of 120–150 persons. This procedure enables them to make biological growth without losing the small, manageable face-to-face character of their domestic group, but demands redistribution of capital and authority. The average growth span is fourteen years.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps when a Qumranic community or “camp” reached a certain amount of members a voluntary and peaceful split would occur.

Now it is possible to grasp the social function of the Qumranic tendency for very small and scattered communities. Being small keeps the community manageable and maintains its internal solidarity (this can also be attested to in commercial companies as well as in the Israeli Kibbutz). Branching makes community life dynamic and creative. Whereas large communities are more vulnerable to differences in opinions and quarrels, intimacy encourages companionship in faith and work. Indeed, people tend to appreciate the uncommon. Furthermore, local, genealogical and ideological differences (inevitable in a large movement) increase the need for social diffusion. The core leadership or central community may or may not direct these growing communities. In this case flexibility is strength.

### Segmentation and the formation of the Qumran sect(s): a proposal

In light of the tendency towards segmentation or branching I would like to propose a tentative reconstruction of the legal formation of the

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<sup>81</sup> Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, 185–190. For the technical procedure of the division and establishment of a new colony see Peters, *All Things Common*, 116–18. Note that the population in the communal center at Khirbet Qumran was estimated at about 150–200 persons.



Qumran sectarians. The very existence of the regulations common to the *yahad* and Damascus Covenant (that also share many common theological features) testifies to a central or common leadership of the local communities that shaped these regulations. The creation of these rules probably occurred in an earlier period (and parallel formations of rules and practices took place in the early days of other sects), after the sect's charismatic leadership was transformed to bureaucratic government. Perhaps during this interim phase the Qumran movement diverged into the Damascus Covenant and the *yahad*. The following phase included further elaboration of the regulations by different local communities, as can be attested to by the variations of the rules and orders within the different sections of *Community Rule* or the *Damascus Document*. This is, of course, a very general theory that should be elaborated on and tested against the writings from Qumran.

Different scales of boundary maintenance within the sect

Although the *yahad* and the *Damascus Document* share similar theology and institutions (*viz.* the penal code) they have very different lifestyles regarding wealth and family, to say the least. It is surprising that these two branches which differed enormously regarding boundary maintenance coexisted side by side within the same movement. Are not sects supposed to split because of even more marginal issues? Perhaps a similar situation among the Amish will allow us with a certain perspective for addressing these questions.

Pennsylvania Amish communities (originating from the same group that arrived there in 1791) rank themselves in the order of their assimilation into the prevailing American culture, from "low" (retaining the old traditions) to "high" church.<sup>82</sup> In most cases, each group respects the customs and rights of the other without attempting to gain converts from each other. However, a less tolerant attitude towards boundary maintenance characterizes shunning (*Meidung*), which is the most coercive sanction in Amish societies, a sanction that preserves the community's social control. The circumstances in which the shunning is

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<sup>82</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 251–59.

practiced vary. If a man marries a girl from a “strict *Meidung* church” and the couple lives in his lenient *Meidung* church she will be shunned for the rest of her life by her church. Members thus must stay in the church into which they are born and must marry in the “clan.”<sup>83</sup>

Although I have pointed to only two examples among the Amish, I think they are sufficient to conclude that the system of boundary maintenance within the sect is more complex and flexible than we usually tend to think. It is impossible to predict what disagreement would be tolerated and what controversy would lead to rupture. The interrelationship between the *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant should be further studied in this respect.

*Conclusions: Obedience is the Key for Salvation*

The above comparison of the regulations of the Qumran sect(s) with those of the Shakers Hutterites, Mennonites and Amish demonstrates that certain types of behavior are characteristic of introversionist sects, although in several respects, especially concerning gender relations and leadership-administration, the variations are substantial. There are typical procedures of joining the sect, admission to adulthood, annual or semi-annual ceremonial communions, sanctions and punishments, confessions, economical organization and organizational patterns, especially the tendency to keep the local community small, intimate and manageable. Certain differences between sectarian practices illuminate the social character of specific sects in relation to economic and organizational structure.

All this has enabled me to show that the regulations of the *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant, which seem so odd to the students of the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as to those who are interested in ancient Judaism or the origins of Christianity, actually are a result of the fascinating social phenomenon of sectarianism. The Qumranic parallels to the practices and organization of the Shakers and the Anabaptists cannot be a matter of coincidence. They are derived from the actualization of the sectarian introversionist ideology in Qumran. They stem (at

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<sup>83</sup> Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 242–43.

least most of them) not from a certain interpretation of Scripture or from external influence, but from a particular and internal worldview. A perception of an endless fear of sin, an aim for redemption and a necessity for maintaining discipline and moral stance.

The elements of the sectarian way of life discussed above promote the withdrawal from the outside world as well as in-group cohesion. On the one hand, outside boundaries were maintained regarding admission of new members and adolescents who reached adulthood, commerciality (leading to common property in the cases of the *yahad*, Hutterites and Shakers) and, in the case of the *yahad* and the Shakers, abstinence from family life and sexual relations. On the other hand, group members' moral standards are reinforced through sanctions and punishments, hierarchical structuring, different types of organization, both authoritative and autonomous, as well as communion rituals that strengthened commitment. Thus, for sectarians, separation and morality are the most important social traits. Sectarian regulations and organizations are designed to support a specific ideology or theology associated with spirituality, morality, revelation etc.<sup>84</sup>

Sectarians hold that belief alone is insufficient and must be accompanied by certain rigorous adherence to social behavioral rules to achieve salvation. However, I have pointed to a hitherto unnoticed variety of sectarian practices, boundaries and organizational patterns. Based on comparisons with other, well documented, introversionist sectarian movements, it is now possible to extend the study of the practical aspects of sectarianism in Qumran, and learn more of their social behavior by focusing on specific choices in certain sectarian options.

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<sup>84</sup> For self-conscious boundary maintenance and pursuing high, sometimes totalitarian, degree of control over the members see, e.g., B.J. Siegel, "Defensive Structure and Environmental Stress," *American Journal of Sociology* 76 (1970), 11–32; W. Bennett, "Social Theory and The Social Order of the Hutterian Community," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 51 (1977), 292–307. However, sectarian social structure has its own limitation, and without spiritual renewal and religious creativity, the sect might suffer decline and defections. See: K. Peter, E.D. Boldt, I. Whitaker and L.W. Roberts, "The Dynamics of Religious Defection among the Hutterites," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 21 (1982), 327–37.

Comparative analysis also highlights the sociological differences between the *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant, which adopted opposing patterns of boundary maintenance. Such differences are usually evident when comparing very different sects, such as the Shakers and the Amish, but raises interesting questions on the relationship between the *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant. Some scholars maintain that one of the two preceded the other, while other scholars believe that membership in the Damascus Covenant constituted a probation period before admission into entering the *yahad*. Still others claim that the two were independent but inter-related sects. Another, quite skeptic, view is that either or both were not actual sects but utopian ideologies that may or may not have been fully embodied in actual communities. Although this question may be approached mainly from a textual perspective, most of these opinions (excluding the latter) may find support in the sociological evidence of sectarianism. Thus, for example, the flexible structure of other sects may support the claim for a type of inter-related independence of the two sects. As two branches of a single social movement, the two communities may have maintained distinctive social boundaries and ways of life, yet shared the same theology and aims.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> For the theological differences between the Damascus Covenant and the *yahad* communities, and the view that the latter developed from the first, see P.R. Davies, "The Judaism(s) of the Damascus Document," in (eds.), *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery*, ed. J.M. Baumgarten et al. (STDJ 34), Leiden: Brill 2000, 27–43. For the view that the two co-existed during the same historical period see F.M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 3<sup>rd</sup> rev. ed., Minneapolis: Fortress 1995, 186. For the view that the members Damascus Covenant were considered as novices in the *yahad*, see Schiffman, *Sectarian Law*, 163; *Law, Custom and Messianism*, 250. For the *yahad* as a latter development of the Damascus Covenant and a general evaluation of the problem cf. Metso, "Constitutional Rules," 196–97, 208–9; Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document*, 90, 101, 122–23, 136, 138–39, 150. For the opinion that one of them or both may have been, at least partly, a result of utopian constructions, see P.R. Davies, "Redaction and Sectarianism in the Qumran Scrolls," *Sects and Scrolls*, Atlanta: Scholars Press 1996, 151–61. According to my own analysis, the *yahad* preceded the Damascus Covenant and the two did not share any organizational connections. See Regev "The *yahad* and the Damascus Covenant."

The closest parallels to the regulations of the *yahad* and the organizational pattern of the Damascus Covenant were found among the Shakers. Admittedly, one of the reasons for this ostensible resemblance may be the use of manuals of orders from early Shaker history, whereas my information on the Anabaptists was secondary and related to the modern period, hundreds of years after their emergence. Nevertheless, I believe that a closer look at the history and ideology of the Shakers and the Qumran movement may lead to the discovery of many social and religious similarities. In fact, it may be interesting to extend the comparison of sectarian ideology, theology and formation, to the Essenes (described by Josephus and Philo and identified by many scholars with the entire Qumran movement) and the earliest Christians.<sup>86</sup>

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# THE BUDDHIST DIMENSION OF JOHN

J. DUNCAN M. DERRETT

## *Summary*

Many features of the Fourth Gospel have hitherto found no source and commentators are confined to imagination. Meanwhile Buddhists' use of Greek, Roman and Jewish materials is established. It turns out, from a close examination of twelve instances, that Buddhist traditions, found in Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna sources, contemporary in essence with St John, offered the latter an opportunity to make his gospel attractive to contemporary targets of Buddhist missions, groups for whom Moses was not a commanding figure. Buddhists would recognise Jesus, already known from "synoptic" or para-synoptic materials, as a Bodhisattva, now a Buddha, who like Gautama promised a Paraclete, strongly resembling Maitreya in character and function.

## *Introduction*

Compiled between AD 90 and (at the latest) 150,<sup>1</sup> the Fourth Gospel contains elements of unknown origin, and they are important. Such novelties, foreign to the synoptics, have no genuine Jewish or Greek background. No allusions to the Old Testament, synoptic precedents, or rabbinical traditions, however frequent,<sup>2</sup> determine this stratum. Alleged Mandaean and Hermetic parallels cease to convince. Post-biblical near-parallels (the Word as "first-born," or as a secondary god; the eternity of the Torah and the name of the Messiah)<sup>3</sup> are at best specious. A Jewish aroma pervades John (see Jn 4:22) and a biblical stratum underpins him: what is non-Jewish must be all the

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<sup>1</sup> J. Marsh, *John*, Harmondsworth 1968, 27–30, 78; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Nashville 1999, lxxv–lxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Ps 22:15.18, 27:1, 35:19, 41:9; Is 1:18, 2:5, 6:10, 29:9, 35:5–6, 42:6, 45:9, 58:11, 63:1–2. *SNT* II 121–46; III 130–60; V 153–61; VI 2–5, 78–92, 97–110, 121–28, 129–31, 145–59, 160–72, 193–201. M. Daly-Denton, *David and the Fourth Gospel*, Leiden 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Philo, *Quaes. Gen* II 62. *SB* II 353–55, 334–35.

more interesting. Qumran provides parallels in vocabulary and even style, but not in essentials.<sup>4</sup> Several advocates interpret John in the light of one or another influence, but it is hard to trace any direct dependence on any one. John put many strands of religious language and experience at the service of Christ.

Parallels between John and Buddhist texts suggest Buddhists imitated John,<sup>5</sup> or that he was helped by them.<sup>6</sup> The definition of the Eucharist at Jn 6:32–58 is acceptable only to Buddhists (section VI below). What, however, of “I am the door,” or “I am the true Vine”? Each has a Jewish root, but each blossoms into a non-Jewish midrash. Meanwhile “I am the Resurrection” (Jn 11:25) has no known background. All source-criticism of John is guesswork (Barrett, Beasley-Murray), the gospel itself an enigma (Frey).

That John so resembled the Lotus Sūtra as to further Christian missions has long been known.<sup>7</sup> New Testament teachers dissented: that John consorted with Buddhists seemed superfluous. But the relevant Buddhist materials eluded them. Partisans for Hīnayāna Buddhism (“H.Y.”) depended on Ceylonese informants, at that time indifferent to the Mahāyāna (“M.Y.”), itself a sequel to the H.Y., in Sanskrit, repelling Western adepts.<sup>8</sup> A Japanese has called the Lotus Sūtra a commentary on the Fourth Gospel.<sup>9</sup> But a coexistence of both H.Y. and

<sup>4</sup> H.M. Teeple, “Qumran and the Origin of the Fourth Gospel,” *NovT* 4 (1960–61), 6–25.

<sup>5</sup> Jn 4:4, 3:14, 7:38 (Ex 17:6, Num 20:11), 12:34. See *BB*.

<sup>6</sup> Jn 8:59, 1:12–13, 10:30 (17:11.23), 14:5–6.30–31, 16:33, 19:12.19, and perhaps 6:60. *BB* 45–46.

<sup>7</sup> T. Richard, *The Awakening of Faith*, Shanghai 1907; id. *Guide to Buddhahood*, Shanghai 1907; id. *New Testament of Higher Buddhism*, Edinburgh 1910, 2nd ed. 1913; E.A. Gordon, *World-Healers*, Tokyo 1913; id. *Asian Christology and the Mahayana*, Tokyo 1921; W.E. Soothill, *The Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, Oxford 1930, repr. 1987.

<sup>8</sup> B.L. Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, London 1959, repr. 1981, 1; E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1976, 642, 644, 647; H.C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, Cambridge MA 1896, xix–xx; *NTHB* 2, 4, 48–49, 142.

<sup>9</sup> Kagawa cited by N. Niwano, *The Lotus Sutra*, Tokyo 1971, 176.

M.Y. was coeval with John's composition.<sup>10</sup> Though whether first-century Buddhism contributed anything to the gospels has been debated for 150 years (see *BB*), it is still a novel conjecture that it elucidates John. Much detail must be examined to evaluate the idea.

There are preliminary warnings: Indian texts translated in China were old then; conservatism ensured ancient ideas surfaced later; and concepts, e.g. Maitreya, bridging H.Y. and M.Y., prove that ideas of the Buddha Gautama matured over centuries. One does not disregard material because it occurs in "late" M.Y. texts; nor because it appears first in China. The M.Y. imported few true novelties. It revived the H.Y. with the aid of Buddha's *post mortem* teachings, projected by receptive Bodhisattvas.

### *Clues*

Both the H.Y. and the M.Y. had problems. How was the *dharma* (the Doctrine, the Norm, the Discipline and the Truth)<sup>11</sup> which had been taught by Gautama between c. 450 and 400 BC to be immunised against heresy, schism (cf. Jn 17:11.21.23) and decay (A i.16–19)? Could this really be done without a centralised and unified authority? Further, does Gautama's salvific power require a monk's trained mind? *Nirvāṇa*, deathlessness, the goal of escapers from craving, could, the M.Y. repeated, be attained, in this life,<sup>12</sup> outside monasteries. Indeed, the "saved" could, in time, become "saviours." The laity could become Bodhisattvas for whom *nirvāṇa* was not simply an aim, but also an expedient.

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<sup>10</sup> H. Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi 1989, 150–53; A.L. Basham, "Evolution," in L.S. Kawamura (ed.), *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism*, Waterloo 1981, 29–31; J. Brough, "Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara," *Indologica Taurinensia* 10 (1982) 65–70.

<sup>11</sup> Sn 453–54, 480; E.J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, London 1933, 13 and n. 2, 89 n. 2. Cf. n. 121 below.

<sup>12</sup> A i.228; ii.156,167; iii.450–51 (H.Y.).



The *dharma* (Doctrine) which Gautama expounded and revered (A ii.21) was *true* and absolute.<sup>13</sup> It corresponded to no “law” (cf. Jn 1:17). It ensured a better way of life now (cf. Jn 10:10).<sup>14</sup> After false starts<sup>15</sup> Gautama opined that *dharma* itself (including *vinaya*) would guide monks, nuns, and layfolk.<sup>16</sup> The impulse to teach had been given by Brahmā, the Hindu god, supporter of Gautama.<sup>17</sup> Both Gautama’s *dharma* and he himself were eternal.<sup>18</sup> By the first century<sup>19</sup> he had three bodies which were/are one body (*kāya*):<sup>20</sup> the *dharma-kāya*,<sup>21</sup> essence of knowledge, absolute, beyond being

<sup>13</sup> Ineffable, transcendent: A ii.21 (H.Y.); everlasting: Jātaka i.19 Fausbøll; SDP XIV.36 (M.Y.); H XV.233; P. Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, London and New York 1989, 18–20.

<sup>14</sup> Aśoka’s Rock Edict IV.5. Kandahar Bilingual Inscription found in 1957 (cf. Lk 7:25; Plutarch, *Timoleon* iii.1). Sn 676, 775, 804. The claim that Aśoka was not a Buddhist is speculative.

<sup>15</sup> Sn 556, 557; M iii.29; A iii.148–49; Mv i.51; Cv VII.3,1. SDP VIII.32. Thomas, *History*, 201.

<sup>16</sup> D iii.77,100,124,154; M ii.245, iii.9,11. M. Edwardes (ed.), *A Life of the Buddha*, London 1959, 164.

<sup>17</sup> M i.167–69; Vin i.4–7; SDP VII. Thomas, *History*, 81–82; *BB* no. 30. A. Bareau, *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les sūtrapiṭaka et les vinayapiṭaka anciens: De la quête de l’éveil à la conversion de Śāriputra et de Maudgalyāyana*, Paris 1963, 136–39.

<sup>18</sup> *Lokottara* (supramundane). Cf. n. 44 below. Lamotte, *Histoire*, 190. Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 18–20. S iii.140.

<sup>19</sup> Basham, “Evolution,” 36–37, 44. Bodhisattvas antedated christology (ibid. 38); Is 53 both.

<sup>20</sup> Anesaki at A.J. Edmunds (ed. M. Anesaki), *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, Tokyo 1905, 191 n. 3. L. de L. Poussin, “Studies in Buddhist Dogma: The Three Bodies of a Buddha (Trikaya),” *JRAS* 1906:943–77. Har Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, London 1932, 18–25, 27, 192. Thomas, *History*, 226, 242. Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 48ff. Lamotte, *Histoire*, 689–90. Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, ch. 8.

<sup>21</sup> D iii.84; Miln 71,73; S iii.120. N. Dutt, *Mahayana Buddhism*, Calcutta 1976, 141, 151–53, 168, 176, 238. Lamotte, *Histoire*, 689. Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 103–5, 107, 171–84.

and non-being;<sup>22</sup> the *sambhoga-kāya*, celestial and refulgent teacher of *devas* (“gods,” “angels”) and Bodhisattvas;<sup>23</sup> and *nirmāṇa-kāya*, terrestrial Buddha(s), purveying *dharma* through love<sup>24</sup> to suffering humanity. No *kāya* is subordinate — they form a unity (cf. Jn 8:28, 10:30.38, 16:32). The three-bodies doctrine, rooted in the H.Y., is Indian. Since the Buddha was identified with *dharma*, the Lotus Sūtra (SDP) itself was his body (cf. Col 2:2–3:9).

As for the second problem, Bodhisattvas could reach *nirvāṇa* without deserting sufferers, whom they undertook to help to reach heavens (SDP XV.11–13) or *nirvāṇa* or a “pure land.”<sup>25</sup> Gautama reached a “non-abiding” *nirvāṇa*, whence he could save humanity.<sup>26</sup> “Taking refuge with the Buddha” was always open.<sup>27</sup> All subject to birth, suffering, death and rebirth (the round of *saṃsāra*) are potential beneficiaries of a Bodhisattva’s vow,<sup>28</sup> which, incidentally, reminds us of Jn 17:18–19.

What of the Christian<sup>29</sup> or Pharisaic<sup>30</sup> “resurrection”? Such a return to terrestrial life was a failure to escape *saṃsāra*, the frustrations of the “world.” However, Bodhisattvas could spend the rest of the Age

<sup>22</sup> Lv cited by Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 54. Perfect intelligence, fountain of compassion.

<sup>23</sup> Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 53: the *sambhoga-kāya* is “incarnated” in the *nirmāṇa-kāya*.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 183.

<sup>25</sup> *Nirvāṇa* is positive and to bring others to *dharma* meritorious: M iii.254. Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 30, 152–53, 221–22, 227. Did Gautama abandon his flock?: *ibid.* 225–26.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. 2 Cor 5:15. E. Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books*, London 1970, 26; Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 53, 181–83.

<sup>27</sup> Basham, “Evolution,” 45.

<sup>28</sup> *NTHB* 23–24, 120–21, 264–66. *BCA* III.8–12. *Teaching of Buddha*, 239th ed., Tokyo 2001, ch. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:4.12–15.20.23.

<sup>30</sup> Is 26:17–19; Dan 12:1–2; Jn 11:23–24; Acts 23:6, 24:15. G.F. Moore, *Judaism*, Cambridge MA 1958, I 68, 86; II 295, 317. *Enc. Jud.* 14:95–103. Mishna, *Sanh.* x.1. Maimonides’ 13th principle of faith.

enabling people to free themselves from it. Jesus' womb-descent,<sup>31</sup> his meriting return to heaven, his absence from earth,<sup>32</sup> his appearances to a few,<sup>33</sup> and promise to be with the pupils "always"<sup>34</sup> proved he too was a Bodhisattva in his last birth. He went up (Jn 6:62, 12:32, 20:17) to heaven and to his Father who is himself (Jn 7:11), temporarily loaned by the latter (16:28), caring still for the "flock" (17:11). "Son of God" is Jewish,<sup>35</sup> and likewise God as Father, so even "resurrection"; but these would not prevent Buddhists' recognising Jesus as (now) a Buddha. The form this recognition would take (*upāya-kauśalya*) is important and will be explained later. It resembles the well-known Christian expedient called "economy."

### Comparisons

#### I. The Eternity of Jesus

1:1–2: In the beginning [Gen 1:1; Jn 8:25] was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God [cf. 20:28].

17:24: Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am [cf. 14:2–3] to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world.

17:5: And now Father glorify me with thyself with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

10:30: I and the Father are one [cf. Col 1:13–20: Jesus' first-born status, the creator, the fullness of God].

<sup>31</sup> Lk 1:35; Jn 1:11–13. M iii.118–21; cf. D ii.12–13.

<sup>32</sup> Jn 20:23–26 (eight days).

<sup>33</sup> Jn 20:16.19–29. Cf. 1 Cor 15:5–6.

<sup>34</sup> Mt 28:20; Mk 16:15–16; cf. Mt 26:11; Jn 12:8.

<sup>35</sup> G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, London 1973, index, "Son of God." Arrian, *Anab.* VII 2,3.

Notions from East and West meet;<sup>36</sup> the *logos* is pre- or non-Christian.<sup>37</sup> The biblical *dāvār*, the prophetic Word (Ex 20:1) is not God;<sup>38</sup> *mēymrā* 'yhwā (divine word) is a targumic euphemism;<sup>39</sup> Wisdom was indeed God's coadjutor,<sup>40</sup> and a later Christian dating of the Word *before time*<sup>41</sup> resembles John. Meanwhile *dharma* (Gk *eusebeia*), "truth," is undecaying.<sup>42</sup> The Buddha is *dharma*,<sup>43</sup> supramundane, eternal.<sup>44</sup> If like Brahmā, modelled on Brahmā's image,<sup>45</sup> he is superior to Brahmā (above) and Śakra (Indra).<sup>46</sup> He is god above gods.<sup>47</sup> His "apparitional birth" (*aupapādika*: cf. n. 174 below) preceded his shout, "I am first, eldest, best," a Hindu (Upaniṣadic) boast.<sup>48</sup> He is chief of the world.<sup>49</sup> The next Buddha, Maitreya (section X below) is eternal.<sup>50</sup> As *devatās* (godlings) provide effulgence everywhere,<sup>51</sup> the bodies of the Buddha

<sup>36</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 9.

<sup>37</sup> H. Ridderbos, "The Structure and Scope of the Prologue to the Gospel of John," *NovT* 8 (1966) 180–201, at 188.

<sup>38</sup> Philo, *Conf.* 62–63, 148.

<sup>39</sup> SB II 302–29.

<sup>40</sup> Ps 104:24, 136:5; Prov 3:19, 8:22–30; Jer 10:12; Wisd 7:25; Sir 24:1–8.

<sup>41</sup> *Odes of Solomon* 12:5, 41:11–14.

<sup>42</sup> S i.71. Kern 303 n. 1 equates *logos* with the Buddha.

<sup>43</sup> *Dharma-bhūta*. Notes 94, 131 below.

<sup>44</sup> SDP XV, trans. 300. H XVI.238. Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 18, 20. Anesaki, in *ERE* 4:836b, citing V.P. Wassilieff (sinologist), *Der Buddhismus*, St Petersburg 1860, 258–62 (French ed. 1865). Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 150–51; Thomas, *History*, 57, 184, 227, 243, 251, 258. Lamotte, *Histoire*, 690, 692 (H.Y.), S iii.140, trans., iii.118; SDP XV.1–7, trans. 307–10; H 242 (M.Y.).

<sup>45</sup> D iii.84; M ii.84, 148, 153.

<sup>46</sup> Lv 8, 118–19. Note 67 below.

<sup>47</sup> Lv ch. 8. Lamotte, *Histoire*, 691–92, 714.

<sup>48</sup> D ii.12–15; M iii.112, 124. J.D.M. Derrett, "A Moses-Buddha parallel," *Archiv Orientalní* 58 (1990) 310–17. The baby Gautama coexists with the transcendent Bodhisattva: Lancaster in Kawamura (ed.), *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 160. Rev. 1:8, 21:6, 22:13.

<sup>49</sup> S i.47, iii.84.

<sup>50</sup> SDP XV, trans. 298–301; H XVI.237–40 (M.Y.).

<sup>51</sup> Edwardes (ed.), *A Life of the Buddha*, *passim*. Miln 222.

produce light (sections II, III below). The *dharma-kāya*<sup>52</sup> appears in the world as one *nirmāṇa-kāya* at a time.

## II. Creation and Heaven

1:3: All things were made through him (or “it”) [cf. Ps 33:6], and without him (or “it”) was not anything made.

1:10: The world was made by him but the world did not know him.

1:14: The Word became flesh and resided among us. . . . We beheld his glory, as of an only child of the Father, full of grace and truth.

1:16.18: And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. . . . No one has ever seen God [cf. 12:45–46]. The only begotten (Word), (who is) God, in the bosom (lap) of the Father [section V below], he has revealed him.

3:13–15: No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up [12:32], that whoever believes may have eternal life in him [section V below].

3:31: He who comes from heaven is above all [cf. 11:27].

6:62: What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before [cf. 20:17c,e]?

6:42: Is this not Jesus . . . how does he say he came down from heaven?

1:51: You shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon (or “to”) the Son of Man [Gen 28:12; *Midr. Rab. Gen.* LXVIII.14].

“Son of Man” is a sobriquet for Jesus, as Tathāgata (“Thus-come,” True Model) is Buddha’s. Equal to Brahmā<sup>53</sup> (the creator),<sup>54</sup> the *dharma-kāya* eternally creates,<sup>55</sup> e.g. disciples<sup>56</sup> to preserve *dharma*.<sup>57</sup> He

<sup>52</sup> Note 21 above. Lamotte, *Histoire*, 689.

<sup>53</sup> Sn 508, 539, 562–63; D iii.84.

<sup>54</sup> D ii.18,201; M i.327; SDP III, trans. 76, 77; vv. 85–97; H 61, 72. *BB* no. 8.

<sup>55</sup> *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*; Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 56, 58. For Wisdom’s origin see Prov 8:22–31; Sir 24:1–8.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Tit 1:4; Philem 10.

<sup>57</sup> SDP X.5; H 176 (M.Y.).

knows all worlds, expounding truth and holy living.<sup>58</sup> Leaving the Tuṣita heaven,<sup>59</sup> his glory outshone 1.000 suns.<sup>60</sup> He brightens even Brahmā's world,<sup>61</sup> his radiance reaching all world-systems.<sup>62</sup> If Israel is God's first-born,<sup>63</sup> the *nirmāṇa-kāya* is in the *dharma-kāya*, the model of the relationship being that of an *aurasa* son (sections V, XII below) to his father.

Moses' serpent (Num 21:9)<sup>64</sup> recalls (a) Śakra's pillar (a "cosmic axis" and symbol of sovereignty),<sup>65</sup> and (b) a healing serpent.<sup>66</sup> Salvation may require heaven-ward traffic: after instructing his mother in the heaven of the Thirtythree (gods) Gautama descended the staircase, venerated by Śakra, Brahmā, and other *devas*.<sup>67</sup>

### III. Life and Light

5:26: As the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son to have life in himself.

10:10: I came that they may have life and have it abundantly [cf. 4:53].

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<sup>58</sup> D i.250 (§40) (H.Y.).

<sup>59</sup> Sn 955; Bc I.19–20.

<sup>60</sup> Dv 46–47, 75, 365; Lamotte, *Histoire*, 714.

<sup>61</sup> S i.145.

<sup>62</sup> A i.228 (H.Y.).

<sup>63</sup> Ex 4:22; Jer 31:9; Ps 89:27; 2 Esd 6:58; Sir 36:12. Philo, *Conf.* 62–63.

<sup>64</sup> SNT VI 78–96. Note Jn 4:50.

<sup>65</sup> John Irwin, various articles on "Aśoka's" pillars and the earth mound.

<sup>66</sup> S. Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, New York 1969, I 125. J.D.M. Derrett, "St John's Jesus and the Buddha," *Archív Orientální* 68 (2000) 71–82, at 72; *BB* no. 26.

<sup>67</sup> Bhārhut (2nd cent. bc), Ajātaśatru Pillar (Indian Museum, Calcutta); A. de Silva-Vigier, *The Life of Buddha*, London 1955, pl. 2; D.L. Snellgrove (ed.), *The Image of the Buddha*, Paris and Tokyo 1978, pl. 9, p. 30; Edwardes (ed.), *A Life of the Buddha*, 113–14, 134. H. Ackerman, *Narrative Stone Reliefs from Gandhāra in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Rome 1975, pl. 13 (IS 11–1947) (gr. M. Willis, British Museum). Fa-hian at Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki*, xxxix, xl–xli; Hiuen Tsiang, *ibid.* I 202–3 and n. 112. On Jacob see L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia 1968, I 350–51, V 290 n. 134. Miln 350.

1:4–5: In him was life, and the life was the light of people [Ps 36:10(9)]. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

1:9: The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.

12:46: I have come as a light into the world.

8:12: I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

9:5: As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

12:25–36: The light is with you a little longer. . . . While you have the light believe in the light [11:9–10], that you may become sons of light [cf. 1:11–13].

3:19–20: The light has come . . . but men loved darkness more than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed, but he who does what is true comes to the light [11:10].

Jews took the Torah to be the world's light.<sup>68</sup> The Servant of God is a light,<sup>69</sup> but Gautama, the light (Sn 508), the world's light-bringer,<sup>70</sup> the lamp of knowledge,<sup>71</sup> the enlightenment of the world,<sup>72</sup> dispels darkness.<sup>73</sup> For *dharma* and arhatship (perfection) are a light;<sup>74</sup> wisdom likewise (A iv.140). The absence of *dharma* is an absence of celestial light (Sn 1016). A man sinning in former lives, born blind, can be cured and his ignorance dispersed: so a Tathāgata can cure infatuation in two stages.<sup>75</sup> "From darkness to light" is Upaniṣadic.<sup>76</sup> The birth of

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<sup>68</sup> *T. Levi* 14:4; *Wisd* 18:4. P. Borgen, "Logos was the True Light," *NovT* 14 (1972) 115–30.

<sup>69</sup> *Is* 42:6 (*Lk* 2:32), cf. 9:1(2) (*Mt* 4:16), 49:6; *Ps* 27:1, 36:9.

<sup>70</sup> *Sn* 378, 991; *S* i.14,47; *D* ii.158; *M* i.386 (H.Y.).

<sup>71</sup> *A* i.164; *Bc* XIII.63.

<sup>72</sup> *SDP* XII.21 (p. 274, trans. 261). Soothill, *Lotus*, XIII.180 (M.Y.)

<sup>73</sup> *Sn* 82, 142. *D* ii.132, trans. ii.144; i.85 (§99); *A* iv.186, i.142. *Sn* 976, 1133, 1136–37.

<sup>74</sup> *Miln* 21; *Psalms of the Saints* I.34,56. Pupils exclaim that light has reached them: *Sn* 87, 142, 315, 486. *D* i.110. *Miln* 42.

<sup>75</sup> *SDP* V.54–70. Cf. *Jn* 9:6; *Mk* 8:22–25. Cf. *M* i.511.

<sup>76</sup> *Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* I.3,28; cf. 4.4,10. N.C. Chaudhuri, *Autobiography*, London 1951, Bk. II, ch. 2. *S* XLV.1,iv; trans. v.22.

a Tathāgata dispels the darkness of ignorance.<sup>77</sup> If Yahweh is a “living God,”<sup>78</sup> in Buddhism “life” means escape from craving and passions, to live a holy life.<sup>79</sup> When Gautama died spirits cried, “Too soon is the ‘Eye’ gone out of the world!”<sup>80</sup> By the 1st-2nd century AD the Buddha Amitābha (“Endless Light”) is Amitāyus (“Endless Life”).<sup>81</sup>

#### IV. Miracles

5:39: He told me everything that ever I did.

1:48: Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

2:11: This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana . . . and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

8:59: Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

10:39: Again they tried to arrest him, but he went out of their hands.

20:19,26: The door being shut . . . Jesus came and stood in their midst.

6:19: Jesus walking on the sea and approaching the boat. . .

20:17: Do not clasp me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

6:61: Jesus knew in himself that the disciples murmured at it (the teaching). . .

6:64: He knew from the beginning who were without faith and who was to betray him.

2:24–25: Jesus did not trust himself to them, since he knew them all . . . he himself knew what was in people.

6:15: Perceiving they were about to come and take him by force, he withdrew again.

11:14–15: Lazarus is dead and for your sake I am glad I was not there.

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<sup>77</sup> Sn 975. D ii.12 (§17), trans. ii.9. S v.442; A i.164 (§3). R. Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu, being the 17th and Last Section of the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādin*, Rome 1977–1978, I 41 (gr. C. Lindtner).

<sup>78</sup> Dt 5:23(26); Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26; Ps 42:2 (LXX Ps 41:3); Mt 16:16, 26:63; Acts 14:15; Heb 9:14.

<sup>79</sup> Sn 289; A i.115, iii.224.

<sup>80</sup> *atikhippaṃ cakkhuṃ loke antarahitaṃ*.

<sup>81</sup> Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, 201–2.



14:12: He that believes in me shall do the “works” I do, and greater than those, because I am going to the Father.

Let the M.Y. be docetic, there are H.Y. parallels. The H.Y. list of *rddhis* (supernatural powers—an ancient Indian group), attributable to *arhats*, includes multiplying oneself; becoming visible or invisible, passing through a wall, etc., as if through air; walking on water creating no wake.<sup>82</sup> He may visit heaven(s) in trance (*samādhi*). He has the “heavenly eye,”<sup>83</sup> whereby the Buddha sees things afar off; and “heavenly ear,”<sup>84</sup> hearing remote conversations, etc. He has knowledge of “mind-asked” questions.<sup>85</sup> The preacher of the SDP has lesser powers.<sup>86</sup> Causing the blind to see, etc.,<sup>87</sup> may be taken literally, or to illustrate the results of his teaching. The power to convert objects from one kind to another or to multiply objects<sup>88</sup> may illustrate the Buddha’s “skilful means” (*upāya-kauśalya*) (n. 175 below), whereby obstacles are obviated.

## V. Eternal Life

3:16–17 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believed in him should not perish but have eternal life [Dan 12:2 LXX; *Ps. Sol.* 3:12]. For God sent the Son . . . so that the world might be saved through him.

12:25: He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

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<sup>82</sup> D i.78,212. J.D.M. Derrett, “Der Wasserwandel in christlicher und buddhistischer Perspektive,” *ZRGG* 41 (1989), 193–214; *SNT* IV 92. *Ps* 77:19, 107:23–32.

<sup>83</sup> D i.82,162.

<sup>84</sup> D i.79,154. *Jn* 4:16ff.

<sup>85</sup> *Sn* 1005, 1017, 1024 (H.Y.). The Buddha teaches at a distance: *ibid.* 1138–43, 1146.

<sup>86</sup> SDP XVIII; *NTHB* 219–21 (M.Y.). H 278.

<sup>87</sup> *Lv* 278–79; *Dv* 365<sup>26</sup>; SDP V.

<sup>88</sup> *Jāt* i.345–49; *Dhp* Comm. iv.5, i.366–76; trans. Burlingame ii.49–54. R. Garbe, *Monist* 24 (1914), 491–92. J.B. Aufhauser, *Buddha und Jesus in ihren Paralleltexen*, Bonn 1926, 20–21. E.J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London 1927, repr. 1949, 246.

3:34–36: He whom God has sent utters the words of God. . . . He who believes in the Son has eternal life. He who does not obey the Son shall not see life [cf. 3:3].

4:36: He who reaps . . . gathers fruit for eternal life.

5:19–28: The Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to whom he will. . . . He who hears my word and believes him who sent me [12:50] has eternal life . . . he has passed from death to life . . . the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God [11:43–44], and those who hear will live . . . all who are in the tombs will hear his voice.

6:39: This is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. Everyone who sees the Son [cf. 6:46] and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

8:50: If anyone keep my Word, he will never see death.

7:37–38: If anyone thirst [Ps 42:3] let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water [Ps 36:10 Tg].

4:10.14: . . . living water [Is 12:3]. Whoever drinks of the water I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life [cf. 7:38; Ps 36:10(9); Jer 2:13].

6:27: Labour for the food [cf. 4:32–34] which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

We have considered “world” and “resurrection” (above, “Clues”). Thirst, *tr̥ṣṇā*, source of sorrow, must be rooted out: the destruction of *tr̥ṣṇā* is almost equal to *nirvāṇa* (section VIII below).<sup>89</sup> The emperor Aśoka wished people to attain to well-being in an after-life.<sup>90</sup> Eternal life, the life of the Age, is *nirvāṇa*, no mere extinction (M.Y.).<sup>91</sup> Those who accept the Buddha and the “right view”<sup>92</sup> will never go to hell.<sup>93</sup> Seeing Gautama one sees *dharma* and vice versa.<sup>94</sup> The Bodhisattva’s

<sup>89</sup> Dhṛ 187; Sn 339, 1085; S v.420–21; D ii.34, iii.238.

<sup>90</sup> Rock Edict X.2, XIII.9; Kalinga Edict I.3, II.3; Pillar Edict III.2, IV.2.

<sup>91</sup> SDP VIII, Kern 195; *NTHB* 181. H 129. Above, “Clues.”

<sup>92</sup> *Sammā-dīṭṭhi* (Skt *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*).

<sup>93</sup> S v.378; A i.31–32, 203–4, 210; M iii.103. SDP XI after v.46 (Kern 248; *NTHB* 195). Edmunds (ed. Anesaki), *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, 129. H 197

<sup>94</sup> S iii.120; Miln 73. Note 131 below.

vow<sup>95</sup> is exemplified at Jn 6:38–39 and 14:3. “Life” is John’s major interest (20:31), but immortality, except as freedom from *saṃsāra*, is foreign to Buddhism.<sup>96</sup> The Buddha refreshes the thirsty with *amṛta*, which is (a) ambrosia, a fluid,<sup>97</sup> and (b) deathlessness.<sup>98</sup> This is *nirvāṇa*, wherein there is no rebirth. One who tastes *amṛta* strives to emancipate others (M.Y.). “Belly” at Jn 7:38, like “bosom” at 1:18, alludes to the *aurasa* (legitimate) son (below, section XII). Meanwhile the Buddha and various Bodhisattvas cause joy in hell, brighten it, refresh hell-dwellers, visit hell, and rescue creatures thence.<sup>99</sup>

## VI. Heavenly Food

6:32–33.35: It was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven; my Father gives you bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life [5:26] to the world. . . . I am the bread of life. . . . He who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst [cf. 4:14].

6:48.51.52–54.59: I am the bread of life . . . a person may eat of it and not die. . . . I am the living bread descended from heaven. If one eats this bread he will live for ever. And the bread which I shall give on behalf of the life of the world is my flesh. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you

<sup>95</sup> Cf. n. 28 above. Aṣṭasāhasrika §22, 402–3, trans. E. Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*, Bolinas 1975, 239; Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 188–93; Basham, “Evolution,” 19–20; Nagao, in Kawamura (ed.), *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 71; Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 49–54.

<sup>96</sup> G. Dharmasuri, *A Buddhist Critique of the Christian Concept of God*, Colombo 1974, 189–91.

<sup>97</sup> *Amṛta-varṣa*, “rain of ambrosia.” Cf. Aristoph. *Eq.* 1095; Apollon. Rhod. IV 871–72.

<sup>98</sup> *Amātosadha*, “ambrosial medicine”: Miln 247. Thirst: Rev 21:6. For “true medicine” see SDP XV, trans. 305; *NTHB* 211.

<sup>99</sup> Derrett, “St John’s Jesus” (above, n. 66), 71–82; *Avalokiteśvara-guṇa-Kāraṇḍavyūha*; SDP XXIII, XXIV; *NTHB* 238; Mv i.40,97; BCA 8, 107, 10:11–12.14–16; Bc XIV.22; M iii.120,123–24; G.C.C. Chang (ed.), *Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*, Philadelphia 1983, 331; *ERE* 4:653 §1; Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 51. Cf. 1 Pet 3:19, 4:6. J.D.M. Derrett, “Christ, the Messiah, and Bodhisattvas Descend into Hell,” *Archív Orientální* 70 (2002), 489–504.

have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.  
He who eats this bread will live for ever.

The end of hunger is death (Plato, *Rep.* 559B). But the metaphor means “the desire of the soul shall be satisfied,” an idea found in biblical<sup>100</sup> and profane Greek.<sup>101</sup> Any vehement appetite (Mt 5:6) suggests *attachment*. The *devatās* have “heavenly food” to administer, e.g. to the Buddha (cf. Mk 1:13c; Jn 4:32). *Nirvāṇa* is achieved by uprooting craving and thirst (*trṣṇā*, *pipāsā*), which bind one to *saṃsāra*.<sup>102</sup> The Jewish objection to blood (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:14, etc.) cannot be overlooked.<sup>103</sup> The Buddha gives *amṛta*, which is *nirvāṇa* (section V above). To donate eyes, flesh, blood for the distressed shows total selflessness.<sup>104</sup> So with a gift of one’s life (Miln 281<sup>4-5</sup>; H.Y.), the Bodhisattva gives any part of himself to succour others.<sup>105</sup> The stories of Śibi and other donors, Bodhisattvas<sup>106</sup> following the Buddha’s example,<sup>107</sup> readily sacrificing body and blood, are notorious. A Bodhisattva makes a vow, “May I become drink and food in the intermediate aeons of famine” (BCA III.8 [M.Y.]).

## VII. The Devil

6:70–71. Did I not choose you . . . and one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas . . . for he . . . was to betray him.

8:40: But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the Truth. . . .

<sup>100</sup> LXX Ps 41:3, 62:2; Jer 38(31):25; Am 8:11 (clear).

<sup>101</sup> Xenoph. *Cyr.* VIII 3,39; Plut. *Mor.* 460B; Lucian, *Amor.* 1; Plato, *Rep.* 562C. For Latin parallels see Wetstenius on Mt 5:6.

<sup>102</sup> Note 89 above. D iii.238. Cf. Jn 12:25.

<sup>103</sup> G. Vermes, *The Changing Faces of Jesus*, London 2000, 21. Derrett, “St John’s Jesus” (n. 66 above).

<sup>104</sup> Derrett, “St John’s Jesus.” *BB* no. 34, esp. 71 n. 91. Such selflessness is an Indian, not an Israelite virtue.

<sup>105</sup> Derrett, “St John’s Jesus,” 78–80. Add: SDP XI, trans. 243; XXII; *NTHB* 231–32; Bc XIV.30; M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, repr. Delhi 1977, II 409; *Journal of Friar Odoric* (Everyman’s Library), London 1928, 241.

<sup>106</sup> SDP XXII, trans. 379–86. H XXIII.294–98.

<sup>107</sup> SDP XI text after v.41, trans. 243 (M.Y.); H 195.

5:16–18: The Jews persecuted him, because he did these things on the Sabbath, but he replied, “My Father is working still and I am working.” So the Jews sought even more to kill him . . . but he also called God his own Father, making himself equal to God.

7:19,23: Did not Moses give you the Law [section I above]? But none of you does the Law. Why do you seek to kill me . . .?

13:2: The devil having already put it into the heart of Judas to betray him [cf. 19:11]. . . . He entered into him [13:27; cf. Lk 22:3].

8:44: You are of your father the devil. . . . He was a murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the Truth, because there is no truth in him.<sup>108</sup>

12:31, 14:30, 16:11: The prince of this world shall be cast out; he is coming, but he has no right over Jesus; he has been judged.

Having a small role in the Bible (Job 1–2; Zech 3), Satan’s equivalent in Buddhism, Māra,<sup>109</sup> is an enemy of *dharma* (S iv.2, §§2, 6), of enlightenment, of escape (Bc XIII.2) from *saṃsāra*. He desires Gautama’s death (D ii.104–5). He is the Evil One,<sup>110</sup> assuming any shape, a tempter<sup>111</sup> offering delights (Sn 1103), the death-dealer,<sup>112</sup> king of *saṃsāra*.<sup>113</sup> His dominion encompasses the “world.”<sup>114</sup> He can enter into people.<sup>115</sup> Sometimes Gautama neutralises him (Sn 1095), being “defeater of Māra’s armies,”<sup>116</sup> “overcomer of Māra” (Sn 545, 571), escaper from Māra’s bonds. To reach enlightenment one must defeat the hosts of Māra,<sup>117</sup> who often deplores Gautama’s *knowing*

<sup>108</sup> Wisd 2:24. S. Motyer, *Your Father the Devil?*, Carlisle, CA 1997.

<sup>109</sup> M i.117–18. T.O. Ling, *Buddhism and the Mythology of Evil*, London 1962; A.W.P. Guruge, in *Indologica Taurinensia* 17–18 (1991–92) 183–208. *BB* 45–51.

<sup>110</sup> *Pāpimant*. Sn 33, 430, and *passim*. S i.103: Miln 155.

<sup>111</sup> S i.103–27. Disguised as Buddha: SDP III.15,20; trans. 63–64.

<sup>112</sup> D ii.114. Commentators equate *Antaka* with *maraṇa*.

<sup>113</sup> W.O.E. Windisch, *Māra und Buddha* (Abh. Sächs. Ges. Wiss. 15:4), Leipzig 1895, 197–98.

<sup>114</sup> Dhp 34; Sn 764; A iv.228.

<sup>115</sup> S i.114; M i.326–27,332.

<sup>116</sup> D ii.114; Sn 561, 563.

<sup>117</sup> SDP XXVI, trans. 433, 438–39. H XXVI.333, 336. Bc XIII.28–73, XIV.1.

him. Buddhist nuns defeat Māra.<sup>118</sup> In the M.Y. Gautama overcame Māra by his friendliness,<sup>119</sup> but the unending warfare belongs to both H.Y. and M.Y.<sup>120</sup>

### VIII. Truth and Freedom

8:31–32.34.36: If you continue in my Word you are truly my disciples, and you will know the Truth, and the Truth will make you free. . . . Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin . . . if the Son makes you free you will be really free [cf. Rom 8:14–17].

14:6–7.9: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by me. If you had known me you would have known my Father also [cf. 8:55, 10:30]; henceforth you know him and have seen him. He who has seen me has seen the Father [cf. 12:45].

Stoics thought wisdom, rabbis that Torah-study amounted to freedom (Mishna, *ʿAvôt* III.5, VI.2; SB II 522); but John was neither Stoic nor a rabbi (Barrett), for he meant liberation from sin. “Truth” renders *dharma*,<sup>121</sup> and *dharmatā* is “the norm” (D ii.12). The Buddha is truth; likewise the *dharma-kāya*.<sup>122</sup> The converted obtain the Eye of Truth (D i.86,110,288). The H.Y. sees the *arhat* as free.<sup>123</sup> Release (from *karma*) is the object of preaching. Truth and knowledge free the learned from sin-causing cankers (Sn 992). Freedom is almost superhuman (Vin iii.91). The unreleased mind gains release (A ii.155–56,167): if from the passions, one is released indeed (S ii.94,124). Mental freedom,<sup>124</sup> and insight freedom are sought — often together.<sup>125</sup> The Buddha ten-

<sup>118</sup> Therīg. 34–35, etc.

<sup>119</sup> Lv 343 cited by J. Filliozat, “Maitreya l’invaincu,” *Journal Asiatique* 238 (1950), 145–49, at 147–48.

<sup>120</sup> SDP XIII after v.44; H XIV.219; Bc XV.11–12.

<sup>121</sup> Vin iv.134; D trans. ii.108; S vii.19, trans. i.213; v.6, trans. 166; viii.5, trans. i.240; A iv.36. *ERE* 4:838b; Thomas, *History*, 201, 219, 256–57, and *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> Iti 92. Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 14–15, 69, 72, 103–5, 171–84.

<sup>123</sup> J.D.M. Derrett, “Oriental sources for John 8,32–36?,” *Bibbia e Oriente* 43 (2001), 29–32.

<sup>124</sup> D i.80, iii.97,100,133; M i.297; A i.240, ii.211.

<sup>125</sup> S i.191, ii.123–25; M i.76, ii.152; A iv.452–53.

ders freedom.<sup>126</sup> Buddhists find Jn 8:32–34 (cf. Rom 6:16–22) corroborates D i.72–73. Hankering after the world is slavery; the world is slave to craving (*taṇhā-dāsa*: M ii.68). The Way (*mārga*) is righteousness,<sup>127</sup> taught by the Buddha.<sup>128</sup> He teaches also the way to Brahmā's world,<sup>129</sup> and so is the world's guide<sup>130</sup> as Brahmā's superior, of course. The *dharma-kāya* and Gautama are synonymous.<sup>131</sup> Longing to see a Buddha is natural (cf. Lk 10:24), rare as Tathāgathas are.<sup>132</sup> Seeing a Buddha is desirable for believing.<sup>133</sup>

## IX. The New Commandment

13:1: Jesus knew that his hour had come . . . he had loved his own who were in the world and he loved them to the end (fully) [cf. LXX 1 Chr 17:16].

13:34; 15:12.17: . . . that you love one another; as I have loved you, so love one another.

Jesus' testament exceeds the Golden Rule.<sup>134</sup> John devised, as a new "commandment," something more compelling. Buddhism emphasised *maitrī*, friendliness (especially towards those not *liked*: cf. Jn 13:14), summed up in Maitreya himself (section X below). *Maitrī* (Pal. *mettā*),<sup>135</sup> active amity, overcomes obstacles, e.g. enmity, obviating quarrels and schisms in the *saṃgha*. By mentally "suffusing" the

<sup>126</sup> SDP V *passim*. Cf. Epictetus IV i.20–23.

<sup>127</sup> Dhp 57, 273; Sn 441, 1130; Vin iii.93; D ii.216,353, etc. M iii.72.

<sup>128</sup> S i.191, iii.66; M iii.9.

<sup>129</sup> D i.249; M ii.207. *BB* no. 30.

<sup>130</sup> Sn 991; Miln 222 (H.Y.); SDP XII.1, *NTHB* 194; H XIII.204 (M.Y.).

<sup>131</sup> Note 94 above. S iii.120; Iti 92; Miln 71, 73. Edmunds (ed. Anesaki), *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, 149–50.

<sup>132</sup> SDP XV, trans. 303–4; H XVI.240 (Thomas, *Life*, 46), XXV, trans. 423. M. Fuss, *Buddhavacana and Dei Verbum*, Leiden 1991, 424 (M.Y.).

<sup>133</sup> SDP III.108 (M.Y.). Note 94 above.

<sup>134</sup> *Contra* L.S. Navarro, "La ley del corazón (Mt 7:12)," *Estudios Bíblicos* 60 (2002), 255–64.

<sup>135</sup> *PED* s.v. P. Gerlitz, "Die Ethik des Buddha," in C.H. Ratschow, ed., *Ethik der Religionen*, Stuttgart 1980, 227–348, at 334–35.

world with selfless *maitrī* one may attain heaven, whatever one's previous life (M ii.194–95 [cf. 185]). *Maitrī* makes no ethnic, caste, or religious distinctions. Jews did not (Lev 19:18)<sup>136</sup> recommend love for all people — witness the Samaritan's exclamation at Jn 4:9. If Jesus recommended love without discrimination (Lk 10:33.37), that fitted the *saṃgha*.

## X. The Paraclete

14:16–17.18–20.21.26: I will pray the Father and he will give you another Counsellor [cf. 1 Jn 2:1], to be with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees him, nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you [cf. Mt 10:20]. I will not leave you orphaned; I will come to you [cf. v. 28]; yet a little while, and the world shall see me no more, but you will see me [16:16]; because I live, you also will live. . . . he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. . . . The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things [cf. Jn 4:25–26] and remind you of all that I have said to you.

15:26: But when the Counsellor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father [Jn 20:22], he will bear witness to me, and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.

16:13–14: When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth . . . whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me; he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

16:7: If I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you, but if I go I will send him to you, and when he comes he will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement [cf. Job 33:23 Heb., Tg.].

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<sup>136</sup> J.D.M. Derrett, "Love thy neighbour as a man like thyself," *Expository Times* 83:2 (1971), 55. (The NEB Lev 19:18 was corrected at REB [1990]).



The Paraclete, John's own invention and his inspiration,<sup>137</sup> is said by Anesaki<sup>138</sup> to be a Buddhist parallel to the Logos. He is (1) the Spirit, (2) capable of being "sent" (a Jewish idiom);<sup>139</sup> (3) as a helper and guide (Ex 23:20–21; Mt 10:10–20; Lk 12:11–12). Here we have *dharma*, whether as a future *nirmāṇa-kāya* (see above) or as an inspiration for *arhats* in trance.<sup>140</sup> *Dharma* is the disciple's guide, but its source is uncertain. Buddhas teach after death,<sup>141</sup> while Maitreya preaches to Bodhisattvas and *devas* in an accessible heaven,<sup>142</sup> himself capable of a descent to earth.<sup>143</sup> He, the next Buddha, popular in Gandhāra art, with roots in the H.Y.,<sup>144</sup> will act as Gautama's deputy.<sup>145</sup> Gautama gave him a splendid tunic as a sign of joy.<sup>146</sup> Maitreya, instructing devotees to perfect morality, embodies "friend-

<sup>137</sup> F. Mussner, at Beasley-Murray, *John*, I–II; J. Behm, in *TWNT* 5:798–812, at 804 (the contemporary world); K. Berger and C. Colpe, *Religionsgeschichtliches Textbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Göttingen: 1987, 180–82 (a blank). O. Betz, *Der Paraklet*, Leiden 1963; R.E. Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 13 (1967), 113–32; *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5:152–54.

<sup>138</sup> *ERE* 4:839b.

<sup>139</sup> Ex 3:13, 4:13, 23:20, 33:2; Is 6:8, 10:6, 19:20, 57:9; Jer 42:5, 1:7, 29:31; Mal 3:1, 4:5; Mt 9:38, 10:19–20, 13:41; Lk 12:11–12, 16:27; Acts 3:20; Jn 1:6, 14:26, 17:8.

<sup>140</sup> Seeing with the mind as well as with the eye: Sn 1142. P. Demiéville, "La Yogācārabhūmi de Saṃgharakṣa," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 44 (1954), 339–436, at 376–77, 382. Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki*, II 228.

<sup>141</sup> SDP XII–XIV. Thomas, *History*, 182; Lamotte, *Histoire*, 692 (M.Y.).

<sup>142</sup> SDP XXVI, trans. 436; cf. H 335. Tuṣita is not totally pure. Demiéville, "Yogācārabhūmi," 376, 389, 390, 392, 395; Lamotte, *Histoire*, 787.

<sup>143</sup> Demiéville, "Yogācārabhūmi," 376, 380.

<sup>144</sup> Dv III (pp. 56–57). Demiéville, "Yogācārabhūmi," 388, 392. Basham, "Evolution," 28, 43. S. Lévi, "Maitreya le consolateur," *Études d'Orientalisme* (Mélanges R. Linossier), Paris 1932, II 355–402, at 358, 365–68.

<sup>145</sup> D iii.26,75–76; Miln 159 (H.Y.), E. Conze, trans., *Buddhist Scriptures*, Harmondsworth 1959, 239–41; Demiéville, "Yogācārabhūmi," 394; Lévi, "Maitreya le consolateur," 365; Lamotte, *Histoire*, 775–88; Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 228–30; Edmunds (ed. Anesaki), *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, 184, 190.

<sup>146</sup> Filliozat, "Maitreya l'invaincu," 145–49.

liness,”<sup>147</sup> his “breastplate.”<sup>148</sup> Meanwhile Buddhas confirm authentic teaching.<sup>149</sup> Missionaries will take *dharma* hither and thither,<sup>150</sup> and, in trance, put questions successfully to Maitreya in the Tuṣita heaven.

## XI. The Fruit of the Vine

12:24–25: Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies it bears much fruit. . . . he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life [cf. V above].

15:1–2.4.6.16: I am the true Vine and my Father is the farmer . . . every branch that bears no fruit he removes, and all that fruits he prunes in order that it may bear more fruit. . . . Abide in me and I in you. . . . If a man does not abide in me he is cast forth . . . thrown into the fire and burned. . . . Your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give it to you [so 16:23].

The image of the Vine is Jewish,<sup>151</sup> so also the emphasis on fruit.<sup>152</sup> Vines were cultivated in Northern India. Both in Israel and India “fruit” means profit, also merit,<sup>153</sup> a metaphor used by Christians.<sup>154</sup> Buddhist “fruit” is knowledge of having attained a stage leading to arhatship, an achievement.<sup>155</sup> Arhatship is *agra-phala*, “chief fruit.”<sup>156</sup> To obtain

<sup>147</sup> Mv i.51, iii.246 (M.Y.).

<sup>148</sup> Maitreya-vyākaraṇa, ed. and trans. S. Lévi, “Maitreya le consolateur,” vv. 69 (*kāruṇika*), 89 (*anukampasva*), 97 (*sarvabhūtānukampaka*). Like Gautama he is “saviour of the world” (v. 85: *lokanātha*). Lévi calls him “comforter” because (p. 356) the pious are consoled by hope of a better life with Maitreya!

<sup>149</sup> Prabhūtaratna at SDP XI. Gautama confirmed formulas tendered by *devas* (H.Y.).

<sup>150</sup> SDP XII, trans Kern 255–56, 258–59. SDP XXVII corresponds to Jn 14:23e. Demiéville, “Yogācārabhūmi,” 380, 381 and n., 384. Cf. Jn 10:16, 12:19–21.

<sup>151</sup> Ps 80:8; Is 5:1–7; Jer 2:21; Josephus, *Bell.* V 210, *Ant.* XV 395. Mishna, *Mid.* III.8. J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, London 1976, 24.

<sup>152</sup> Is 3:10; Mishna, *Pe’ā* I.1.

<sup>153</sup> Prov 8:19. Result: Miln 174–76, 203, 351. Merit: *ibid.* 240, 294. M iii.256. SDP XVI.30–31, 48.

<sup>154</sup> Jn 4:36. Cf. Mt 3:8, 7:16, 12:33; Mk 4:20; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 9:10; Jas 3:17. Lk 12:17–18 is ironical.

<sup>155</sup> D iii.132, i.51. Miln 16, 35–36, 79, 214, 241, 333–34, 342.

<sup>156</sup> D iii.78; A i.107.

it one must destroy the deadly taints (*āśravas*) of emotional life.<sup>157</sup> *Mārga* (way), fruit, and *nirvāṇa* are linked. John imputed enjoyment of fruit to the Father (Gen 2:15; cf. Lk 13:6–9), not excluding the harvesters (4:36); in Buddhism it is the individual's. Incidentally, since deeds are like fruit (Miln 72), and recluseship also (Miln 99), a sage can give such abundant "fruit" that gifts to him earn merit (Miln 416). So *arhats* (unlike businessmen) are like a field, their patrons like farmers.<sup>158</sup> The merits of sages work more for others than for themselves. Therefore the M.Y. deprecates quests for (mere) arhatship.

## XII. Empowerment

20:21–23: "As the Father sent me, so I send you." And so saying he blew upon them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you cancel the sins of any, they are cancelled. If you retain any they are retained."

The status of Buddhist missionaries is shown in the *Laṅkāvatāra*<sup>159</sup> and the SDP.<sup>160</sup> A true disciple of the Buddha (cf. Jn 13:23) is an *aurasa* (breast-born, legitimate) son, born of the teacher's mouth, born of *dharma*, created by *dharma*, heir to *dharma*.<sup>161</sup> He is fully taught (D ii.100,154–55). Ānanda spoke *dharma* with authority,<sup>162</sup> as did others. Śāriputra was heir to *dharma*.<sup>163</sup>

John plunders Gen 2:7 (cf. Ps 104:30) and Ezek 37:4–14 to create a bizarre un-Jewish scene. The disciples of Jn 20:22 were not clay nor bones. But with the gift of life through the prophet who commands the "breath" to blow on them, and the Spirit which Yahweh will put in them, the house of Israel will live and enter their "land." The disciples

<sup>157</sup> PED s.v. *phala*.

<sup>158</sup> Petavatthu I.1, cited by I.B. Horner, trans., *Milinda's Questions*, London 1969, II 300, n. 4.

<sup>159</sup> *Laṅkāvatāra* 73, trans. D.T. Suzuki, London 1932; repr. 1978, 64–65.

<sup>160</sup> SDP XXVII (Gautama commissions them). Cf. SDP XII.19; XXVI, trans. 433.

<sup>161</sup> D iii.84; S ii.221, iii.83; M iii.29; Iti 100. Edmunds (ed. Anesaki), *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, 131. Regarding Brahmins: D iii.81; M ii.84–85. Manu i.31,94–95.

<sup>162</sup> A ii.132; also D ii.144–45. A ii.144–46,156–57,162.

<sup>163</sup> M i.11–18; ii.84,89,148–49.

represent the Twelve Tribes (technically “dead,” Mt 8:22), and the Saviour blows upon them, the Spirit following (X above). Wisdom was the vapour of the power of Yahweh (Wisd 7:25; Sir 24:3), but no one had blown it since the time of Ezekiel (cf. Ps 33:6). John shows Jesus constituting the Ten (Thomas being absent) his heirs, an Indian pattern. Blowing could be lethal (Lucian, *Philops.* 12); but blowing upon descendents is a Hindu (Upaniṣadic) sacrament of heir-making, heir-empowering.<sup>164</sup> To be “born from the mouth” is an authentic pedigree.

Forgiveness is a function of the Son (Col 1:14) but the Buddha conferred no power to “untie” sins or “keep them tied,” i.e. manage corporate morality, a Semitic idiom.<sup>165</sup> To define and absolve sins appertained to the Holy Spirit at Qumran (1QS III.6–8); a man’s sins were atoned for by the “spirit of holiness uniting him with (revealed) truth”; and by the spirit of humility his sin was expiated: so that community healed both sin and sinner. In the Buddhist formula of confession one acknowledged one’s fault; the latter is then “accepted” by the hearers, assuming his burden. The penitent expects to “do better thereafter.” If he is not literally absolved, both parties uphold *dharma*.<sup>166</sup> Repentance and confession figure largely in *saṃgha* discipline.<sup>167</sup> Meanwhile Maitreya (X above) receives the confessions of the laity,<sup>168</sup> as does the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (BCA II [Confession of Faults]).

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<sup>164</sup> J.D.M. Derrett, “Why did Jesus Blow on the Disciples? (John 20,22),” *Bibbia e Oriente* 40 (1998), 135–46, at 242–44; id. “An Indian Metaphor in St John’s Gospel,” *JRAS*, 3rd ser. 9 (1999), 271–86, at 273–76.

<sup>165</sup> Mt 16:19, 18:18. Jn 9:41. *SNT* IV 190–95. Josephus, *Bell.* I 111. Tg Neofiti Gen 4:7. G. Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies*, Leiden 1975, 121–26.

<sup>166</sup> J.D.M. Derrett, “Confession in Early Buddhism,” in *Bauddhavidyāsudhākaraḥ: Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert*, ed. P. Kieffer-Pülz and J.-U. Hartmann, Swisttal-Odendorf 1997, 55–62.

<sup>167</sup> Pāṭimokka, the Pācittiya offences and the Pāṭidesanīyas.

<sup>168</sup> Lamotte, *Histoire*, 787.

### Conclusion

Buddhism illuminates Johannine passages hitherto not convincingly paralleled. Johannine oddities remind us of formulas common to H.Y. and M.Y. Gautama speaks of himself as grandiloquently as John's Jesus. John's retelling "what went on" would be understood by Buddhists' pupils. The Many Mansions of Jn 14:1–3 would appeal to Buddhists interested in the *Heilsgeschichte*, accepting its biblical underpinning as a cultural convention. Could John convert Buddhists?

About AD 100, when the M.Y. began to dominate Buddhist missions, the Buddhist tolerance of foreign tongues, maxims, and cults<sup>169</sup> and hostility to dogmatism<sup>170</sup> gave Christians many openings. While Jewish missions to non-Jews existed,<sup>171</sup> Buddhists had paved ways throughout the former Persian empire for them. Sarvāstivādins, Mahāsāṃghikas (both Lokottaravādins)<sup>172</sup> and Mahāyānist could inform Jewish and other Christians of what their story told, irrespective of its Jewish (local) undertow.<sup>173</sup> Jesus, miraculously born,<sup>174</sup> was obviously a Bodhisattva whose sacrifice had earned him *nirvāṇa*, whence, united with the absolute, he reached posthumous pupils, and

<sup>169</sup> Some societies were as good as Greeks: Arrian, *Anab.* III 27,4–5. A Bodhisattva may teach any religion as "relative truth": SDP XVIII.19, text after 66 (trans. 351); Thomas, *History*, 211, cf. 257. All religious and moral leaders may be *saṃbhoga-kāyas* of the Buddha: Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 57.

<sup>170</sup> Sn 796–803, 824–34, 878–94, 895–914, 1080–83. D ii.93. *Dharma* is truth: D ii.93–94, 119. There is only one: Sn 884–86.

<sup>171</sup> Rom 1:14,16; Acts 10:34–35, 13:46, 18:16. Jews as Seleucids' administrators: Josephus, *Ant.* XII 148–53.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. n. 18 above.

<sup>173</sup> The eccentricities of Judaism are incomprehensible to Chinese: P.S. Buck, *The Bondmaid*, London 1949. John mediates the Bible to minds and cultures.

<sup>174</sup> Both Lk 1:35 and Jn 1:14 suggest "apparitional birth" (cf. above, section I). Cf. G. Obeyesekere, *Imagining Karma*, Berkeley CA 2002, 331–34.

by the further use of *upāya-kauśalya*,<sup>175</sup> a dextrous economy<sup>176</sup> enabled Christians to move propitiously further into Asia.

This is not unconscious “religious syncretism” nor a conflation of two deities (well-known in the Hellenistic world).<sup>177</sup> Nor were the timbre and presuppositions of the gospel sacrificed to foreign mythology. But Buddhist sympathy made John, and with John Christ, intelligible to peoples who, owning no allegiance to Moses (cf. Jn 9:28–29), have long since been forgotten.

### Appendix

Was this a one-way movement? No. The H.Y. itself consulted John, as illustrated at Miln 77, an egregious parable. The king asks where *paññā* (wisdom, understanding) dwells. *Paññā* is a technical term.<sup>178</sup> Nāgasena replies, “Nowhere.” Did it exist, then? Nāgasena asks where the wind (*vāta*) dwells. When the king replies, “Nowhere,”

<sup>175</sup> A technique of insinuation, SDP II.21,41,71,104,124,143; III.112; IV.48–49; V.35,43; VII.102; VIII.13; IX.7. Laṅkāvatāra xiii.64 (§26). Chang, *Treasury*, ch. 22 (the *pāramitā* of ingenuity). Suzuki, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 67; Basham, “Evolution,” 31, 48. Michael Pye, *Skilful Means*, London 1978. The expression figures at R. Malek (ed.), *The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ*, vol. 1 (Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 50:1), Sankt Augustin 2002, 230–31. Mani made great use of this, see Klimkeit, *ibid.* 249–50. Translation and editing are required to project new religious ideas. So in the Manichaean *Hymn-scroll* Jesus is addressed as a *fo* (Buddha) (*ibid.* 236).

<sup>176</sup> G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s.v. *oikonomia*, esp. D.6. “Economy” may include equivocation and dissimulation; also half-truths, mythical representations, legends, etc., which if they did not occur ought to have occurred. Arguments may represent feelings on which they can rest, to which they can recur when perplexed. . . . C. Kingsley at J.H. Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, London 1972, 58.

<sup>177</sup> G. Shipley, *The Greek World after Alexander*, London and New York 2000, 170. Beasley-Murray, *John*, liii–lvii: John relates to groups with traditions other than his own. G.D. Kilpatrick, “The Religious Background of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. F.L. Cross, London 1957, 36–44: John invades Hellenistic paganism through Judaism, while the biblical religion was never invaded by the pagan world.

<sup>178</sup> Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary*, 4th ed., Kandy 1980, s.v.

N. innocently concludes, “Well, Sire, there is no wind.”<sup>179</sup> *Vāta* is not connected with *paññā*, nor has *vāta*’s homelessness anything to do with it. That wind illustrates the gods’ invisible benefits was Socrates’ idea (Xenophon, *Mem.* IV 3,13–14); but wisdom is not mentioned. The Christian parallel is Jn 3:8. Describing those “reborn through the Spirit” Jesus quaintly says:

The wind<sup>180</sup> blows where it wills;<sup>181</sup> you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born from the Spirit.<sup>182</sup>

The Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and prophecy. John relies on *pneuma*, Spirit (Job 32:8) (Heb. *rûaḥ*) being polysemic. It means both “spirit” and “wind”—an untranslatable polysemy. The wind causes unseen effects (2 Kgs 3:17); one recalls the “unknown way” of the wind<sup>183</sup> and its homelessness.<sup>184</sup> “Understanding” too has no source but God.<sup>185</sup> However, Wisdom and Spirit are repeatedly connected.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Horner, *Questions*, i.105. See also Miln 270, trans. Horner II 89.

<sup>180</sup> Bernard, following Augustine, followed by T.M. Donn, *Exp. Times* 66 (1954–55) 32, took *pneuma* to mean Spirit. Rejected by L. Morris, *John*, Grand Rapids 1971, 220, while C.H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge 1965, 365 n. 1, and *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge 1968, 223, believed it meant both wind and Spirit. C.K. Barrett agrees.

<sup>181</sup> Or rather as God wills. Gen 8:1; Num 11:31; Ps 147:18, 148:8; *Ep. Jer.* 60; cf. Ezek 11:19, 36:26, 37:9, 43:16–17; Dan 7:2, 11:4; Cant 4:16; *TWNT* 6:450 n. 34. Cf. 2 Sam 22:11.

<sup>182</sup> Marsh, *John*, 178–79; R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, London 1968–82, 1:374. For the manifold workings of the spirit see 1 Cor 12:6. For Indian parallels see Julius Grill, *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung des Vierten Evangeliums*, Tübingen and Leipzig 1902, 1923, vol. 2:339–40. Malek (ed.), *Chinese Face*, 200, 296 (v.13). Jn 3:8 is linked with Miln 270 by P. Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, Chicago and London 1915, repr. London 1995, §LIII, 154, 265.

<sup>183</sup> Prov 30:4; Qoh 11:5; 4 Ezra 4:5.9.11. Admittedly God releases the winds from vaults: Ps 135:7; Jer 10:13, 51:16!

<sup>184</sup> Qoh 1:6, and note Prov 27:16.

<sup>185</sup> 4 Ezra 5:9–10; Sir 24:7, 1:6.

<sup>186</sup> Gen 41:38; Job 32:8; Dan 5:11–12.

*Pneuma sophias* is a Christian cliché.<sup>187</sup> Spirit and wind coincide dramatically at Acts 2:2–4. The “movement” of wisdom can somehow be likened to the movement of the Spirit, and movement by the Spirit (a topic fit for anthropologists).

Is 11:1–2 is suggestive:

And there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse . . . and there shall rest upon him the Spirit of Yahweh, the spirit of wisdom and discernment, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh.<sup>188</sup>

This prophecy is not confined to King David,<sup>189</sup> but Jewish commentators have recognised a prediction of the Messiah.<sup>190</sup> So John’s likening the Spirit to wind is not as absurd as it seems. Since the source of the Spirit is that of the winds the effects of the former<sup>191</sup> in the spiritually reborn are naturally unscheduled. The parable used by Nāgasena can be traced to John. He adopts John’s prosopopoeia while both exploit the parabolic form. Meanwhile the similarities between John and the SDP are notorious,<sup>192</sup> the latter claiming that all scriptures come from the Buddha (SDP XV; Kern, 301–2). SDP V uses Mk 8:24 and Jn 9.

Even if John was not the first evangelist to profit from contact with Buddhists he stood near the head of a tradition which became a fashion. When Manichaeans translators wished to propagate their ancient texts in Chinese, Sogdian and Old Turkish they made extensive use of Buddhist *termini technici*. From the third century such work shows great ability. The Buddhist language was the dominant religious code

<sup>187</sup> Dan 2:21; Joel 3:2–3 (2:28–29); Wisd 1:6, 7:7; Acts 6:10; 1 Cor 12:8; Eph 1:17; Col 1:9. *TWNT* 6:369 n. 24.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. G.B. Gray, *The Book of Isaiah I–XXVII*, Edinburgh 1912, 211–17.

<sup>189</sup> Ibn Paqûda, *Hôvôt ha-Levâvôt* (Duties of the Heart), VIII D, trans. M. Mansoor, London 1973, 399 (otherwise trans. M. Hyamson, Jerusalem and New York 1970, II 281).

<sup>190</sup> Justin, *Dial.* 87; Tg Is 11:2; Bab. Talm. *Sanh.* 93b (Soncino Press trans. 626–27); *Midr. Rab. Gen.* II.4, XCVII (Soncino trans. 17, 902). *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* III (end) (trans. G. Friedländer, 19); *Pesiqta’ Rabbati* 33.6, trans. W.G. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati*, New Haven and London 1968, II 641; *TWNT* 6:382. *I En.* 49:3.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. n. 186 above.

<sup>192</sup> For example Jn 2:27–31 (SDP XX; trans. Kern 366); 12:24 (SDP XV; Kern 303).



in China and Central Asia for centuries.<sup>193</sup> Nestorians in the seventh century and later made use of Buddhist expressions to commend Christianity to Chinese sceptics.<sup>194</sup>

*Abbreviations*

A	Āṅguttara-nikāya
BB	J. Duncan M. Derrett. <i>The Bible and the Buddhists</i> . Bornato in Franciacorta 2000.
Bc	Buddha-carita
BCA	Bodhicaryāvatāra
Cv	Cullavagga
D	Dīgha-nikāya
Dhp	Dhammapada
Dv	Divyāvadāna
ERE	<i>Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics</i>
H	L. Hurvitz. <i>Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma</i> . New York 1976.
Iti	Itivuttaka
Kern	H. Kern, trans. <i>Saddharmapuṇḍarīka</i> (1884, repr. 1963)
Lv	Lalitavistara
M	Majjhima-nikāya
Miln	Milindapañha
Mv	Mahāvastu
NTHB	Timothy Richard. <i>The New Testament of Higher Buddhism</i> . 2nd ed. Edinburgh 1913
PED	<i>Pali-English Dictionary</i>
S	Saṃyutta-nikāya
SB	Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck. <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch</i> . 6 vols. Munich 1926–1956, repr. 1961

<sup>193</sup> G.B. Mikkelsen in Malek (ed.), *Chinese Face*, 228–29, 229 nn. 39–40 (heavily documented), 231, 238; H.-J. Klimkeit, *ibid.* 243–57, esp. 251, 253, 296 n. 4, 303. Mani went to India in AD 241–42.

<sup>194</sup> P.Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*, 2nd ed., Tokyo 1951; Malek (ed.), *Chinese Face*, 35–36, 161, 165–67, 177, 186, 204, 296, 311, 334, 361.

- SDP     Saddharmapuṇḍarīka (Lotus Sūtra)  
Sn       Suttanipāta  
SNT     J. Duncan M. Derrett. *Studies in the New Testament*. 6 vols.  
          Leiden 1977–1995  
Tg       Targum  
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## BOOK REVIEWS

KAREN L. KING, *What Is Gnosticism?* — Cambridge, Mass., and London:  
The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003 (xiv + 343 p.),  
ISBN 0-674-01071-X (cloth) \$29.95.

Last summer an important book was published, written by Karen King, professor of Ecclesiastical History at Harvard Divinity School. It poses an intriguing question, highly relevant for the study of early Christianity as well as for the investigation of ancient Mediterranean religion more generally: What is Gnosticism?

Nearly sixty years after the sensational discovery at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt of forty-six original works — presumably gnostic, we still do not know the answer to that question. This lack of knowledge is the point of departure for Karen King when she sets out to map the history of the study of Gnosticism in the twentieth century.

Problems of terminology and classification loom large in this book. The term “Gnosticism” was not used for any religion in antiquity, but has served as a category for the heretical other of orthodox Christianity. Professor King reveals the construction of Gnosticism as being part of the large rhetorical enterprise of constructing normative Christianity. In a similar manner and with similar strategies as the Christian polemicists wrote treatises against what they saw as heretics within their own ranks, they wrote polemics against Judaism and apologetics addressed to Greeks and Romans. These works were part of Christianity’s identity formation. A main point in King’s work is that many of the ancient polemicists’ arguments have been incorporated in the twentieth-century scholars’ analysis of Gnosticism — independently of whatever research position they otherwise defended.

King proceeds to an analysis of the main trends in the history of research on Gnosticism: Adolf von Harnack branded Gnosticism as “the acute Hellenization of Christianity.” The protagonists of the History of Religions School saw it as a pre-Christian phenomenon with its roots in the Orient. This school included Richard Reitzenstein with his *Iranischer Erlösungsglaube* and “the Gnostic redeemer-myth,” as well as Wilhelm Bousset who regarded gnosticism as a pre-Christian Oriental religion. Walter Bauer spoke against “the ecclesiastical position” with regard to the reconstruction of early Christian

history, stressing the existence of different Christianities and pointing out that some of them only later came to be viewed as heretical. The brilliant work of Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, influenced at least one whole generation of gnostic scholars. With his phenomenological and typological approach, Jonas claimed that the essence of Gnosticism was the alienation felt by late antique man in a complex and hostile world.

Karen King brings her research history up to date with the presentation of the painstaking work of translating, editing and publishing the original texts from Nag Hammadi. After 1600 years of silence the Gnostics finally speak back. Alas, they do not speak with one tongue, but with several, and they say almost nothing about who they were. The new texts offer mythology, not sociology. We still have a long way to go to grasp the implications of this discovery.

The church-fathers collected and wrote what they called medicine chests against heretics, to show that their views were false, their practices disgusting and their teaching inspired by Satan. What alternative medicine does Karen King prescribe for the late modern study of Gnosticism?

One of the conclusions in King's book consists in her showing the variety of the gnostic material. It is simply not possible to confine it within one typological schema. A reconstruction of Gnosticism further implies a full realization of the variety of early Christianity itself and therefore also represents a challenge to the traditional identity of normative Christianity.

A second conclusion takes the form of a warning against the search for origins, authenticity and pure types. King calls for an analysis of "the discourses, processes, and practices by which people make sense of their lives in contexts of ancient pluralism, the governing regimes and institutions that further and constrain such practices, and the power relations that are at stake" (p. 223). In short, she asks what cultural works these texts did and for whom.

Karen King is very successful in describing the state of the art of gnostic studies and in pointing out a fruitful way for future studies. The book is well written and enjoyable reading. King is rightfully generous in her analysis and praise of the past masters. (Somebody should make provisions for a republishing of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, which Karen King makes highly relevant for the present situation in gnostic studies). King is also very good at showing the interrelatedness of Christianity and Gnosticism, to the point that even the term "Gnosticism" should be abandoned. But even if King contests the adequacy

of current definitions of gnosticism, she continues to use the term. I read this as provisional. The term will be abandoned once one knows more about the variety that was early Christianity. Because this variety for so long was denied by Christian orthodoxy, and church histories for decades after Nag Hammadi still were written as if it were business as usual, this study has barely begun.

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JEFFREY CARTER (Ed.), *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader (Controversies in the Study of Religion)*—London and New York: Continuum 2003, (xi + 467p.), ISBN 0-8264-4879-8 (hc.) £75.00; ISBN 0-8264-4880-1 (pb.) £19.99.

The importance of religious sacrifice in the theory building of religious studies cannot be stressed enough. Jeffrey Carters selection of twenty-five important essays makes an anthology that covers the debate during the last century or so, giving an extensive and highly readable introduction to the subject. The essays are chronologically arranged. Each essay contains an introductory biography of the author and his approach to sacrifice. There is no need to describe each contribution here, as students of sacrifice should be acquainted with many of them beforehand. A general introduction by the editor summarizes the important questions connected with religious sacrifice and the approaches and understandings given by the various scholarly traditions (e.g. classification of sacrificial types and their evolution, quest for origin, explanations of modality such as gift giving and reciprocity, intentions and results, explanations of social effect, sacrifice as communication, the central place of violence, the sociology of the sacrificial meal, the male versus female role, and the psychoanalytical understandings of why individuals sacrifice). This summary follows the layout of the anthology where the scholarly approaches could be classified into traditions. In the individual introductions, the editor has chosen to give each approach (with a few exceptions) a suitable name that characterizes the various theoretical approaches. Thus we are presented with the following essays and theories:

1. E.B. Tylor, excerpt from *Primitive Culture* (1832): gift theory

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2. H. Spencer, excerpt from *The Principles of Sociology* (1877): fear theory
3. W.R. Smith, excerpt from *The Religion of the Semites* (1894): communion theory
4. J.G. Frazer, excerpt from *The Golden Bough* (1890): magic theory
5. H. Hubert & M. Mauss, excerpt from *Sacrifice, its nature and function* (1898/1964)
6. E.A. Westermarck, excerpt from *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (1912): exchange theory (although Westermarck himself labels it substitution theory)
7. E. Durkheim, excerpt from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912/1965): combination of communion and gift theory
8. S. Freud, excerpt from *Totem and Taboo* (1913/1950): guilt theory
9. G. van der Leeuw, excerpt from *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (1933/1986): combines a form of gift-theory with communion-theory
10. G. Bataille, excerpt from *The Accused Share* (1949/1991): consumption theory
11. A.E. Jensen, excerpt from *Myth and Cult among Primitive Peoples* (1951/1969): commemoration theory
12. E.E. Evans-Prichard, "The Meaning of Sacrifice among the Nuer" (1954): substitution
13. W. Burkert, excerpt from *Homo Necans* (1972/1983): hunting theory
14. R. Girard, excerpt from *Violence and the Sacred* (1972/1977): scapegoat theory, a version of a substitution theory
15. J. van Baal, "Offering, Sacrifice and Gift" (1976): communication theory
16. V. Turner, excerpt from "Sacrifice as Quintessential Process: Prophylaxis or Abandonment" (1977): transformation theory
17. L. de Heusch, excerpt from *Sacrifice in Africa* (1985): structuralist (or relations-) theory
18. V. Valeri, excerpt from *Kingship and Sacrifice* (1985): representational theory
19. J.Z. Smith, "The Domestication of Sacrifice" (1987): elaboration (or domestication-) theory
20. R. Daly, "The Power of Sacrifice in Ancient Judaism and Christianity" (1990): Christian theological understanding of sacrifice
21. B. Lincoln, "Debreasting, Disarming, Beheading: Some Sacrificial Practices of the Scythians and Amazons" (1991): ideology theory
22. N. Jay, excerpt from *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity* (1992): descent theory
23. W. Beers, excerpt from *Women and Sacrifice: Male Narcissism and the Psychology of Religion* (1992): narcissism theory
24. M. Bloch, excerpt from *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience* (1992): violence theory
25. J.D. Levenson, excerpt from *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son* (1993): obligation theory

Although some of the labels given to the various theories could be problematic, as some seek to explain sacrifice in only one culture (Evans-Prichard, Valeri, Lincoln) while others do so universally, they might be of some help in organizing the history of sacrificial theory. In some cases, such labelling might have the disadvantage of directing attention to certain parts of a theory while neglecting other, equally important parts. Although it is justifiable to name the theory of Girard "the scapegoat theory," and that of Burkert "the hunting theory," these labels tend to divert the attention of the reader away

from the true focus of their theories, i.e. from the fundamental role these authors attribute to the social experience of violence, an experience, moreover, they view as the origin of much more than just sacrifice. One could also have been content with a grouping of different theories under larger headings, such as for example evolutionary, sociological, psychological, etc. theories — as is the case when the theory of Luc de Heusch is labelled as “structuralist.”

When it comes to the selections made, one could, of course, argue for the inclusion of some scholars who have been left out instead of some of the ones represented. But overall the selection provides excellent insight into a century old debate, presenting the reader with the gist of the most influential texts. (Though, as the editor himself admits (p. 10), many would probably have liked to see, e.g., Detienne and Vernant, included in an anthology such as this). To compensate for the omissions, a most valuable bibliography is included at the end.

In the early days of our discipline, sacrifice was seen as one of the key phenomena for the understanding of religion as such. Scholars then often approached the fact of the near universality of sacrifice as a cultural institution with the idea that an understanding of this particular phenomenon would reveal why people are religious at all. However, this view of sacrifice did not disappear together with the end of social evolutionism. In the early seventies, sacrifice again became the primary focus of scholars trying to prove the central role of this ritual in the making of humanity. Walter Burkert and René Girard saw sacrifice as the spark that *kindled* human social building, suggesting that sacrifice was at the origin not only of religion as such, but of ritual and mythology as well, and, in the case of Girard, of all social institutions. Although these theories have failed to gain general acceptance, primarily on the grounds of their universalism and their tendency to excessive generalizations, they are still influential in contemporary scholarship. Today, sacrifice is often studied in the contexts of other rituals and of the specific communities where the ritual appears, but still many general statements are made regarding it. Such theories are not arguing for origins, but nevertheless imply that sacrifice is a cross-culturally attested human act that can tell us much about who we are. Thus, in the last decade or so the theories of Jonathan Smith, Nancy Jay, and Maurice Bloch provide examples of how the ritual of sacrifice can be universally understood as a vital factor contributing to the emergence and maintenance of cultures based on the domestication of animals (Smith), to gender divisions (Jay) and to state formation (Bloch).

This anthology surveying the long debate of religious sacrifice not only covers some of the most discussed questions in religious studies. It offers, at the same time, profound insights into the theory building and the methods of our discipline. The anthology does not of course resolve the questions surrounding religious sacrifice, but it reveals the large scope of religious studies and the wide range of possible approaches to religious phenomena. It shows that religious studies have developed into an interdisciplinary field combining approaches from the humanities, theology, psychology and the social sciences. As the editor puts it in the introduction (p. 7): “a study of attempts to understand sacrifice will mirror a history of attempts to understand religion. By collecting theories of sacrifice, this anthology, therefore, also presents the reader with a glimpse into many theoretical issues that have marked the academic study of religion since its beginning.” It can only be highly recommended.

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RUSSELL T. MCCUTCHEON, *The Discipline of Religion: Structure, Meaning, Rhetoric* — London and New York: Routledge, 2003 (xxi, 317 p.), ISBN 0-415-27490-7 (pbk.) £19.99.

Russell T. McCutcheon is well known to those interested in method and theory as one of the most prolific critics of the academic study of religions on the North American scene. In two earlier books — *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (1997) and *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (2001) — McCutcheon offered close readings of major trends in religious studies and uncovered a hidden agenda: by singling out something as ‘religion’ scholars partake in a normalizing discourse with significant political implications. In his new book the author picks up these issues, once more. Given the fact that *The Discipline of Religion* is a collection of revised articles that had been published between 1993 and 2002, along with a new introduction and afterword, the book does not add anything significant to the arguments McCutcheon has put forth earlier. Rather, it is an attempt to clarify his position and to respond to criticisms, which the author feels to be a rhetorical misreading of his earlier contributions.

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McCutcheon's approach is focused on one important task, namely on "applying a theory of social formation to an academic discipline in order to understand the role played by various rhetorics in creating and sustaining seemingly coherent social identities" (p. x). Consequently, the author is not interested in religion but only in 'religion,' i.e. in the ways and strategies that established and put into practice the very notion of 'religion,' thus creating powerful identities of academic selves and communities. His tools of analysis are mainly derived from Michel Foucault's theory of discourse and power, and McCutcheon uses them persuasively. The strongest chapters of his book address the "Genealogy of credibility" (part I) and "Techniques of dominance" (part II), in which the author describes the social formation of an academic study of religion with all its contingencies and strategies of power. McCutcheon correctly emphasizes that scrutinizing the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that form a community or analyzing the subtext of academic behavior provides a reading of contemporary religious studies that adds to a better understanding of the manifold interferences between the academe and public culture. To be sure, the contingency of knowledge and the social and political dimensions of 'scientific' communities have been described by many other scholars, from Nietzsche onwards—I wonder why the author does not discuss Steven Shapin, Lorraine Daston, M.J.S. Rudwick, Karin Knorr Cetina, and particularly Bruno Latour—but McCutcheon justifiably raises the issue with regard to the academic study of religion.

*The Discipline of Religion* does not restrict itself to deconstruction but intends to pave the way for a new understanding of the discipline: "My point is that the future of the study of religion likely does not lie in searching for a more adequate or accurate definition of religion; instead, *it lies in the direction of a thoroughly self-reflexive historicization of the very existence of this socio-cognitive category, regardless its definition*" (p. 235, italics original). With his claim "to study the discursive field of religion—including scholarship of religion" (ibid.), which necessarily leads to a meta-discipline of religion, McCutcheon does not stand alone (among others, Gavin Flood argued similarly, but is not mentioned by McCutcheon). Although this claim is justified, the author does little to solve the major problems of any meta-theory: (1) A meta-discipline is in itself a discipline that needs to be reflected upon; this leads to a 'recursive backlash' which has to be addressed openly, e.g. with an 'ironistic' method *à la* Richard Rorty. (2) McCutcheon does not explain how scholars of 'religion' might switch from meta-theory to the

‘ordinary’ objects of their study (regardless of their definition); he does not even make sufficiently clear what he holds to be suitable objects of study that are not placed between quotation marks. Where he does give a hint, his agenda boils down to a quite conservative list of characteristics: “why it is that people invest such tremendous amounts of intellectual creativity and social energy talking about invisible beings or the origins, purpose, and fate of the universe” (p. 148). McCutcheon does not seem to be interested in historical *knowledge*, however precarious this might be. But the search for knowledge that is justified according to commonly held criteria is a task of academic reasoning, which we should not give up (and, by the way, this is a job understandably enjoined on us by the public and not by some vague “religious studies industry”).

Another problematic of McCutcheon’s book is that it is not clear whom he is actually attacking. Quite against his remarks that he is *not* addressing only outdated Eliadean phenomenology and religionist approaches (see p. x-xi), he does little to disprove some critics’ opinion that he is flogging a dead horse (referring to the utterly unsystematic and Christianity/America centered survey of the American Academy of Religion — masterly deconstructed in chapter 4 — does not seem to be enough). On p. xii, for instance, he excludes J.Z. Smith’s and B. Lincoln’s work from “the Chicago school” (which he is attacking) and describes his approach as a critical reading of “the discourse on sui generis religion or the private affair tradition in our field.” But given this focus, McCutcheon’s generalizations — that at times border on a theory of conspiracy — seem far-fetched. Maybe it would have been a good idea to draw more on the results of like-minded scholars (not only in the English-speaking world), instead of engaging himself in a personal battle against a few antagonists who are metonymically ‘sexed up’ as representing the whole.

In sum, as a contribution to meta-theory *The Discipline of Religion* is a well-argued and thought-provoking book. As description of the pragmatics and the public role of the academic study of religion, though, in my view the book does not provide new insights.

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WALTER JOST and WENDY OLMSTED (Eds.), *Rhetorical Invention and Religious Inquiry: New Perspectives* — New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000 (426 p.), ISBN 0-300-08056-5 (hc.) US\$50.00; ISBN 0-300-08057-3 (pbk) US\$22.00.

'Great expectations' might describe the first impression given by this extensive volume on the complex relationship between rhetoric and religion. Containing seventeen articles (seven of them reprints) by well-known participants in the US-American debate of the topic (admitted: Paul Ricoeur is *not* American), the volume is organized in four parts which classify the contributions according to a rough rhetorical distinction between 'topics' and 'tropes,' each of them introduced by a summarizing reading-aid. The names of the editors, Walter Jost (English, University of Virginia) and Wendy Olmsted (Humanities Division and the Committee of the Ancient Mediterranean World, University of Chicago), promise quite an interdisciplinary survey.

Despite the trend in cultural studies of the last decades known as the 'rhetorical turn,' this is the first collection of writings asserting a special coherence between rhetoric and religion. Therefore, especially readers interested in methodological questions of the scientific study of religion may be curious about the concepts of religion and rhetoric the contributors are operating with. The editors present an onto-anthropological view: according to them, the discussions should "help readers appreciate how human beings are at once religious and rhetorical creatures" (6). More specifically they propose to overcome polarizing arguments which describe rhetoric as per se anti-religious or which suspect rhetoric of being 'merely' immanent or deceptive. Above all, this position involves opposing postmodern understandings of rhetoric, here seen as a reductive narrative written against "metaphysics of presence that is thought to be 'religion' proper" (3).

This perspective leads some of the authors to answer crucial questions concerning the initial relationship with clearly religious claims ("consider the capital letters," could be the motto of the second impression): Walter Ong, for example, reflects on the role of the spoken word in both sacred and secular history and proposes an "oral-aural theology" ("The Word as History: Sacred and Profane"); Wayne C. Booth reveals Kenneth Burke, who with his 'logology' clearly discriminates the Word of God from 'god-terms,' as a "disguised theologian" (27), an interpretation which on the one hand contains an analysis of interesting 'topoi' of a modern, undogmatic religiosity, but which on the other hand implies that rhetoric itself inevitably points

the way to religion (“Kenneth Burke’s Religious Rhetoric: ‘God-Terms’ and the Ontological Proof”); Stephen H. Webb gives prominence to the hyperbole as a focus of understanding religion and from this perspective derives a Christian “blessed excess” (“Theological Reflections on the Hyperbolic Imagination”); Debora K. Shuger, in her informative article, examines the crucial “quarrel between philosophy and rhetoric” by demonstrating Renaissance “sacred rhetoric” to be the confluence of the historical contradictions between rhetoric and philosophy (“The Philosophical Foundations of Sacred Rhetoric”). Here, as with Wendy Olmsted’s “Invention, Emotion, and Conversion in Augustine’s Confessions,” one would also wish to see some mention of processes of assimilation in the course of the convergent history of the antique traditions of rhetoric and the Christian traditions of theology and philosophy.

What resonates here is that “religious inquiry” mainly means a focus on Christian topics and that rhetoric within the lines of reasoning needs to be discriminated from sophistry, mostly to the detriment of the latter. Only David Tracy in his discussion about Freud and Lacan points at different religious and rhetoric traditions and thereby to the cultural complexities of imaginations of the relation between language, reality and religion (191; “Prophetic Rhetoric and Mystical Rhetoric”). Here, as in Susan E. Shapiro’s salient investigation of E. Levinas’ critique of rhetoric and its function for an ethical philosophy (“Rhetoric, Ideology, and Idolatry in the Writings of Emmanuel Levinas”), a valuable intertextual discussion evolves, particularly via the interpretation of religious language as poetic and poetical language as religious proposed by the *grandseigneur* of the (ontological) theory of metaphor, Paul Ricoeur (“Naming God”). What rhetoric can achieve as a methodological approach to questions of a scientific study of religion is demonstrated by Stephen Happel’s aesthetic perspective on religion (“Picturing God: The Rhetoric of Religious Images and Caravaggio’s Conversion of Saint Paul”) and by Mark Krupnick’s historical perspective on changing imaginations within a culture (“The Rhetoric of Philosemitism”).

Although it had not been possible to mention all the aspects of all the articles it should have become clear that wide ranging connections between the difficult concepts of rhetoric and religion are addressed in this book. Some precarious questions were circumnavigated and some of the theological treatments must stand the question as to whether they do not give sustenance to the old hierarchy the editors initially wanted to overcome, namely, placing

rhetoric in an ancillary position towards theology. But if we ignore this asymmetry, already expressed in the title of the volume, and read it as a pool of ideas and interconnections, these essays effectively show how essential, how comprehensive and how fruitful this approach is.

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DAVID S. POWERS, *Law, Society, and Culture in the Maghrib, 1300–1500* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization)—Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002 (280 p.) ISBN 0521816012, £45.00.

Despite the importance of norms for legal, ethical, and moral conduct attested in most religious traditions, the systematic study of sacred law constitutes only a modest field inside the discipline of History of Religions. New impetuses arise rather from the “margins,” e.g., those considering the generally acknowledged importance of codices from the Old Orient for law codification research.<sup>1</sup> The more interesting debates tend to focus on captious details of text-centered comparatism. However, the essential questions have not been subjected to discussion: the identification of and the distinction between legal and social norms (to say nothing about the religious ones!), the discernibility of legal institutions, or the modes of using multiple legal forums—although all these issues have figured as daily agenda items in the debates of Legal Anthropology.<sup>2</sup> We have to look over yet another neighbour’s fence into current studies of Islamic Law in

<sup>1</sup> See H.J. Gehrke (ed.), *Rechtskodifizierung und soziale Normen im interkulturellen Vergleich*, Tübingen: Gunter Narr 1994 (ScriptOralia: Reihe A, Altertumswissenschaftliche Reihe 15); E. Lévy (ed.), *La codification des lois dans l’antiquité: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg 27–29 novembre 1997, Université Marc Bloch de Strasbourg*, Paris: De Boccard 2000 (Travaux du Centre de Recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce Antiques 16).

<sup>2</sup> M. Mundy (ed.), *Law and Anthropology*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2002 (The international library of essays in law and legal theory: Second series).

order to experience a remarkable shift in the approach to the subject of sacred law. After decades of stagnation, characterized by Joseph Schacht's famous statement on the "closing of the door of *ijtihād*,"<sup>3</sup> or independent reasoning, the classical conceptualisations of the *sharīʿa* have been questioned by an increasing number of scholars. The recent founding and success of a stimulating journal — with the programmatic title *Islamic Law and Society* — has demonstrated an interest in the link between the legal order and its social contexts as well as the application of methods drawn from the cultural sciences on the interpretation of historical documents.

One major source for this enterprise has become accessible with the edition of a large collection of Maghribinian and Andalusian *fatwās* (legal consultations), issued between the 14th and the 16th centuries CE, and compiled by Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī (d. 1508). He assembled about 6,000 legal opinions, covering almost every aspect of social, economic, and religious life of his period, and constituting "a bottomless ocean that easily swallows anyone who penetrates its depth" (Powers, p. 6). Since its publication in 1983, this opus, known as *al-Miʿyār al-muʿrib* (The Clear Measure), has served as a fruitful resource for a large number of studies on the social history of the Maghrib.<sup>4</sup> In this context, David S. Powers' *Law, Society, and Culture in the Maghrib* represents not only a major landmark of a larger project, but also contains the interim results of his personal occupation with the *Miʿyār* for about fifteen years.

Six chapters deal with different aspects of law in action. In the first chapter, throughout a heritage dispute, one follows the legal reasoning of a *qādī* (judge), who was obviously not aware of the arbitrary notions of Max Weber's *Kadijustiz*. In the second chapter, an esteemed legal scholar risks punishment by stoning for proceeding to divorce and remarriage rather too frequently, and tries to save his skin by claiming for himself the right of personal *ijtihād*. The third chapter introduces urban jurists, who make use of expert investigations on allocations of water resources in two Moroccan mountain villages and

<sup>3</sup> Schacht, Joseph: *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press 1964, 71.

<sup>4</sup> Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Wansharīsī, *Al-Miʿyār al-muʿrib wa al-jāmiʿ al-mughrib ʿan fatāwī ʿulamaʾ al-ifriqiya wa al-ʿandalūs wa al-maghrib*, 12 vols., index, Beirut & Rabat: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī & Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs 1981–83.

introduce economical changes into their decisions. Competing legal norms of endowment rules and inheritance rules interact in the fourth chapter with norms of agnatic and cognatic descent in the process of determining a stipulator's intention. In the fifth chapter, two Berber scholars, father and son, slander the family of a *sharīf*, a descendant of the prophet, and are consequently confronted with the accusation of blasphemy — a welcoming occasion for the *qāḍī* to outline the rules of proper conduct between laymen and the emerging class of *sharīfs*. Finally, two *fatwās* on feigned sales demonstrate the stylistic subtleties of legal argumentation available in the register of Maghribinian jurists.

There are two distinctive features worthy of notice in these accounts from 15<sup>th</sup>-century Maghrib. First, Islamic law is neither a fixed body of unchangeable rules nor a mere deontology. The norms of the *sharīʿa* attest a remarkable pliancy when it comes to their practical application, which doesn't, however, exclude the fact that these norms, put in a just manner and according to an appropriate context, might provide effective means for the pursuit of entitlement to one's rights. Powers insists repeatedly on the importance of legal doctrine for the evaluation of such contexts (e.g., pp. 50–52, 137–39, 232). Second, this argument points to the relationship between textual hermeneutics and anthropology, or sociology. A salient theme of the book is the comparison of the material with recent anthropological fieldwork in Morocco.<sup>5</sup> Whereas the observers of Muslim societies identified the fabric of social networks as a primary determinant in the legal conceptions of the *qāḍī*, the historian's perspective adds a corrective: the auto-logic of legal doctrine, i.e., the development, (re-)definition, and application of technical terms, embodied inside a long-termed discourse on judicial authority. The rationalization process of law, this is one of the most important messages of the book, is also inherent in the *sharīʿa*, an ideal type of sacred law.

One should, however, not expect a concise introduction into the doctrine of the Mālikī school of law. This undertaking has not been realized to date, and is beyond the scope of the study. But even without a profound knowledge of Islamic law, these case-studies will attract those interested in the actual

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., pp. 137, 167, 206, in L. Rosen, *The Anthropology of Justice: Law as Culture in Islamic Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1989.

application of sacred laws as well as in the cultural specific notions involved in the elaboration of legal doctrine.

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FRANCISCO DIEZ DE VELASCO, *Introducción a la Historia de las Religiones* — Madrid: Editorial Trotta <sup>3</sup>2002 (<sup>1</sup>1995, <sup>2</sup>1998) (637 p.) ISBN 84-8164-564-8 (pbk.)

FRANCISCO DIEZ DE VELASCO and FRANCISCO GARCÍA BAZÁN (eds.), *El estudio de la religión* — Madrid: Editorial Trotta 2002 (434 p.) ISBN 84-8164-554-0 (cloth)

FRANCISCO DIEZ DE VELASCO (ed.), *Miedo y religión* — Madrid: Ediciones del Orto 2002 (380 p.) ISBN 84-7923-295-1 (pbk.).

As Francisco Diez de Velasco himself observes in his *Introducción a la Historia de las Religiones*, the study of religion in Spain has not reached the level attained in other European countries. This fact applies to Spanish-language scholarship in general, so that, unless they are interested in the religious history of Spain or Latin America, scholars of religion who are not Spanish-speakers generally do not feel compelled to learn the language of Cervantes. The situation is changing, however, and now we see an increasing number of Spanish-language books that deal with the phenomenon of religion from a variety of perspectives. Among the works published recently, three volumes written or edited by Francisco Diez de Velasco (one of them in collaboration with Francisco García Bazán) stand out. The first one to be discussed, *Introducción a la Historia de las Religiones*, is perhaps the most comprehensive one-volume treatment of the phenomenon of religion available in a Western European language. Its comprehensiveness is enhanced by the fact that, besides providing a historical overview of religious phenomena, from hunter and gatherer societies to contemporary ones — accompanied by figures, maps, charts, statistics and websites — the book includes chapters on theoretical and methodological issues. The



historical section proceeds from small-scale societies to hierarchical ones, in a manner that, instead of being concerned exclusively with doctrinal issues, emphasizes the intimate connection among religion, survival and power relations — without, it must be stressed, circumventing contemporary issues: see, for instance, the discussion of the fate of Palestinians under Israeli occupation (341–342). The historical chapters tend to become longer as the book proceeds; thus while the chapter on Mesopotamia is barely seven pages long, the one devoted to Greece increases to eighteen, and the segment devoted to Christianity reaches forty-one. In any case, the selection of topics and their treatment within a given chapter is never less than judicious, even though, more often than not, one would have wanted a chapter to continue for a few more pages: one would hope, for example, that in a future edition Manichaeism — a religion self-consciously designed by its founder as a world religion — will be allocated more than twenty-eight lines!

The theoretical and historical sections are supplemented by seven bibliographical essays that total more than fifty pages. The titles listed — many of which are Spanish translations of works originally published in other languages — show Diez de Velasco to be a scholar of extraordinary erudition, one who is as conversant with scholarship on ancient Greek religions as with research on New Age. Some corrections and additions are necessary, to be sure; for example, Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* is listed as being in two volumes, while in fact the third one (written with Frantz Grenet) has been available since 1989; similarly, the literature on Taoism could be enriched by referring to Livia Kohn's works; likewise, reference could be made to Axel Michaels, *Der Hinduismus* (1997, now available in English), the most comprehensive one-volume treatment of the subject, as well as to Bernard Sergent, *Les Indo-Européens* (1995) and *Genèse de l'Inde* (1997). A fourth edition could also be used to correct some minor misprints: Gerardus van der Leeuw appears more than once as Gerhardus Van der Leeuw. A new edition may also give the author the opportunity to reconsider whether, despite his use of the term 'phenomenology,' Geo Widengren can be said to have "attempted to delimit a non-historical view of religious phenomena, which would make possible to generate a theologically acceptable language" (49): it must be remembered, after all, that the original title of Widengren's *Religionsphänomenologie* (1969), namely, *Religionens värld* (1953), means simply "The world of religion." It will also be necessary to refer to recent debates surrounding the date of the Buddha, who may

have been born a hundred or more years after the traditional date of *circa* 560 BCE (393). Another issue that ought to be addressed is the tension—not to say, contradiction—between the author's continuous references to Vattimo's *pensiero debole*—and the implied rejection of the Enlightenment, universalism, etc.—on the one hand, and his outright condemnation of practices such as clitoridectomy (609, cf. 595), on the other: is not this condemnation a rejection of the prevailing fear of adopting any stand and therefore a rejection of *il pensiero debole*? Despite this criticism, however, it must be said that this is a book that because of its thoroughness, sound scholarship and, above all, judiciousness more than fills a gap; in fact, this reviewer cannot think of a one-volume work that compares to Diez de Velasco's study. Fritz Stolz' *Weltbilder der Religionen* (2001)—the last work of one of the great scholars of religion of our time—while ultimately more interesting because of its theoretical framework—which, as the subtitle indicates, involves the interplay between *Kultur und Natur, Diesseits und Jenseits, Kontrollierbares und Unkontrollierbares*—is less than half the length of the book under review. One would hope, therefore, that this book will be read both within and beyond the borders of the Spanish/Catalan/Portuguese-speaking world. One would indeed hope that reversing the usual path, which usually involves translating into Spanish books written in the languages usually associated with scholarship, this *Introducción a la Historia de las Religiones* may one day be translated into other languages.

Whereas the *Introducción* is consistently solid, *El estudio de la religión* is inconsistent and uneven. Thus while Diez de Velasco and José Bermejo seem to be interested in moving away from the reification of mystical experience (382) and from constructs such as *homo religiosus* (279), García Bazán (36–38) and Severino Croatto (61ff.) appear to have built their contributions around those very concepts. In fact, while valuable in many respects, García Bazán's chapter on "religion and the sacred" tends to shift from an expository to a quasi-hermetic approach. Eduardo Mendieta's contribution, devoted to the sociology of religion, is quite different from the previous ones, as he is interested in Habermas' and Luhmann's theories; still, one wishes that he had descended from the theoretical realm in order to deal with specific cases (and one wonders whether Rorty's understanding of the historiography of philosophy is as illuminating as Mendieta seems to think). In his essay on the anthropology of religion Manuel Marzal does not go beyond C. Geertz' pan-

symbolism, nor does he take into account critiques of Geertz such as Asad's. Despite his reference to the phenomenon of syncretism, Marzal fails to refer to any discussion of this important subject; likewise, he neglects to refer to ecological and ethological approaches — but, perhaps to make up for these absences, he approvingly quotes the Catholic convert Evans-Pritchard about the anthropologist having to give up his place in favor of the theologian (134). Carlos Gómez' chapter on the psychology of religion is devoted mainly to Freud, having little to say about contemporary developments. Contemporary research is quoted sparingly in Francisco Rubia's chapter on religion and the brain. All these deficiencies become even more salient (and puzzling), when one realizes that in his contribution, one of the editors of the volume, Díez de Velasco, discusses in an insightful manner what the specialists in the area have neglected to mention! Thus, while Gómez does not mention cognitive approaches to the study of religion, Díez de Velasco refers to developments in cognitive science, which he quite properly describes as the most promising approach to the study of religion in the coming years (390). Likewise, whereas the chapters that deal with ritual — Croatto's and Marzal's — do not refer to Burkert's or Rappaport's work, Díez de Velasco does mention *Creation of the Sacred* (1996) as well as the Spanish translation of Rappaport's magnum opus, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (1999). Besides Díez de Velasco's concluding essay on autonomy, neutrality and plurality in the study of religion, readers will find valuable Bermejo's chapter on the comparative method, Julio Treballe's discussion of historico-philological criticism and Isabel Cabrera's essay on phenomenology and religion. It can be said, to sum up, that while Díez de Velasco's book is indeed an admirable *Introducción* to the study of religion, *El estudio de la religión* is neither as comprehensive nor as up to date as the collaborative efforts devoted to introducing the various approaches to the study of religion published during the last fifteen years: *Religionswissenschaft* (ed. H. Zinser, 1988), G. Filoramo and C. Prandi, *Le scienze delle religioni* (1997<sup>3</sup>), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (ed. M. Taylor, 1998), *Guide to the Study of Religion* (ed. W. Braun and R. McCutcheon, 2000) and *Théories de la religion* (ed. P. Gisel and J.-M. Tétaz, 2002).

The third volume to be discussed, *Miedo y religión*, contains revised versions of papers presented at a conference that took place at the University of La Laguna, Canary Islands, in February 2000 — that is, shortly after much of the world had celebrated the two-thousandth anniversary of a miscalculated

date, a celebration that was spiced up by the fear of a technological meltdown. The contributions cover a range of issues, having to do with the connections among fear, violence and religion, although it must be said that in the case of some of the papers that relation is at best tangential; in some cases, in fact, the point of the article is to demonstrate that fear does not play a central role in a religion: see Jean Verpoorten, “La peur et la fin du monde selon le bouddhisme” (one of the three contributions in French). Especially timely, given current debates about *laïcité* in France, is Jean Baubérot, “La peur de la religion dans la construction de la laïcité française,” only that in this case the source of fear is not Islamic fundamentalism but Roman Catholicism; this contribution is complemented by the chapter by José Rodríguez and Fernando Américo, which studies the role played by the fear of the Roman Church in the configuration of the French state. José Paiva’s essay — one of the two in English — is devoted to the examination of the reasons for the almost complete absence of a witch hunt in Portugal (and also in Spain and Italy): despite its stylistic shortcomings this is an extremely valuable study, one which forces us to reconsider current theories about witchcraft persecutions. In her contribution, Diana Segarra makes some interesting points about the interplay between space and time in millennial expectations. Millennialism is also the subject of Juana Torres’s study of *prodigios* in the *Historiae* of Raúl Lampiño. By far the longest chapter, Máximo Martín Cabeza’s study of *legitimismo* as millenarism, is also one of the most intriguing, as it reverses our preconceptions concerning the social location of millenarian expectations. Finally, the role of fear in the Bible, Orphism, Christian apocalypticism, Islam and Hinduism is the subject of the chapters by Julio Treballe, Alberto Bernabé, José Blázquez, María Arcas, Montserrat Abumalham and Javier Ruiz: it is a pity that lack of space precludes a discussion of these and other insightful contributions, whose authors frequently engage in virtuosic stylistic and philological analyses — but a couple of exceptions must be made, if only to call attention to Treballe’s discussion of the proper translation of *wehepīšūhū* in Job 8,11 (226); to Abumalham’s conjecture about the apparent survival of certain ways of looking at the world among Semitic peoples involving bargaining (*regateo*) between gods and human beings (364); as well as to Blázquez’ accurate use of the term *rastrera* (336) to refer to the bishop of Hippo’s attitude towards sexuality. The volume concludes with an essay by the editor, in

which he demonstrates once again his discernment and his command of the literature.

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ERNST TROELTSCH, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGA)* im Auftrag der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften hrsg. von Friedrich Wilhelm Graf; Volker Drehsen; Gangolf Hübinger; Trutz Rendtorff — Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 1998—

*KGA 5: Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902/1912) mit den Thesen von 1901 und den handschriftlichen Zusätzen.* Hrsg. von Trutz Rendtorff in Zusammenarbeit mit Stefan Pautler. 1998 (xv, 317 p.) ISBN 3-11-016114-1, €138.00.

*KGA 8: Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt (1906–1913).* Hrsg. von Trutz Rendtorff in Zusammenarbeit mit Stefan Pautler. 2001 (xv, 474 p.) ISBN 3-11-017156-2, €178.

*KGA 15: Schriften zur Politik und zur Kulturphilosophie (1919–1923).* Hrsg. von Gangolf Hübinger, in Zusammenarbeit mit Johannes Mikuteit. 2002. (xx, 658 p.) ISBN 3-11-017157-0, €198.00.

Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) is one of the founders of cultural history, but, unlike his friend, Max Weber, he was not discovered in the sixties; nevertheless, his work has undergone a renaissance, relatively small, but respectable. Like Weber, he evaluated religion as the centre of the development of modernity; unlike Weber, however, Troeltsch regarded Christianity as the European form of religion, having once reproached Weber for his paganism (quotation in *KGA 15*, p. 448). Preceded by a book-series, *Troeltsch-Studien* (vols. 1–12, 1981ff), a comprehensive critical edition of his enormous work has been launched. Given that Troeltsch himself published his two *opera magna* as part of his *Gesammelte Schriften* — a fourth volume was edited by his pupil Hans Baron after his sudden death — one would be justified in asking whether a new edition was necessary. The publication of the first three — of the planned twenty-one — volumes of the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* demonstrates, however, that the new *KGA* is worth the scholarly and financial effort. Troeltsch

often worked for years on the same issue, publishing his works at various stages of completion. It is for this reason that the new volumes proceed thematically, gathering around the books papers concerning the same theme, as well as Troeltsch's hard to decipher marginal notes. Every volume contains an introduction by the editor (of around fifty pages), the text of Troeltsch's printed version along with his alterations in subsequent editions, his marginal annotations as well as a commentary. They also include biographical notes about the persons mentioned and a two-part bibliography, which includes the works Troeltsch used as well as the works the editor regards as important for the context of his time or the later reception; there is also an index of persons and — very valuable — an index on topics.

Volume 5 contains the small book, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums*, which made Troeltsch famous as a historian and theologian. Troeltsch tried to combine systematic theology, analysis of modern culture and history; he regarded history as the way through which systematic options were realised. The fact that Troeltsch mingles theology and historical facts as the "truth of history" constitutes a hermeneutical problem throughout his work. In this volume the editor has also included two short texts, which had been read in the same conference in 1901. Volume 8 offers eight texts (two of them in English) on the cultural significance of Protestantism for the development of the modern world, an issue with which he and Weber were concerned. In fact, when writing about a revision of the section on Christianity of his own *Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen*, Max Weber pointed out that Christianity had already been dealt with, albeit in a provisional manner, in Troeltsch's *Soziallehren*. When, because of his breakdown, Weber could not accept the invitation to be the main speaker at the congress of German historians in Stuttgart (1906), Troeltsch read instead his famous essay *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, which constitutes the core of this volume (p. 183–316). The concept of Weber's Protestant ethics (published in 1904/05) is developed in these texts, anticipating Troeltsch's *Soziallehren* (1912, to be edited in volume 9). For Troeltsch, Calvinism and American Protestantism — rather than Luther, the German (whom Troeltsch regarded as "still medieval") — are the avant-garde of progress (the English translation was titled *Protestantism and Progress*; the preface is printed among the texts).

Volume 15 shows the important political and intellectual role played by Troeltsch in the history of the foundation of the Weimar Republic. The volume gathers thirty-five texts (one in English) from the period in Troeltsch's

life, when, after World War I, he became a member of the democratic government of the Weimar Republic. While at the beginning of the war he still belonged to the Nationalists, after the war he was one of the few professors who joined the German Democratic Party and co-operated with the democratic government as secretary of state for public education. He aimed at a new synthesis of European cultures based on the Enlightenment, rather than on nationalism and conservatism. The most progressive leaders of this synthesis he found in the former war enemies: Germans should join British, American and French ideals of democracy, separation of church and state (the first amendment of the American constitution is cited more than once), human rights, humanism. Most of the texts in this volume are thus political statements and programs for a new school-system. One article *Die Krisis des Historismus* is a summary of the arguments he would present in detail in the same year (1922; to be published as *KGA*, vol. 16, i–ii).

The volumes are expensive, but splendidly printed and bound. The introductions explain in an excellent manner the historical and scholarly contexts of this formative period of European intellectual history. Every library should have this outstanding edition, alongside Weber's collected works, as the historical foundations of *Religionswissenschaft* before and after *Religionsphänomenologie*.

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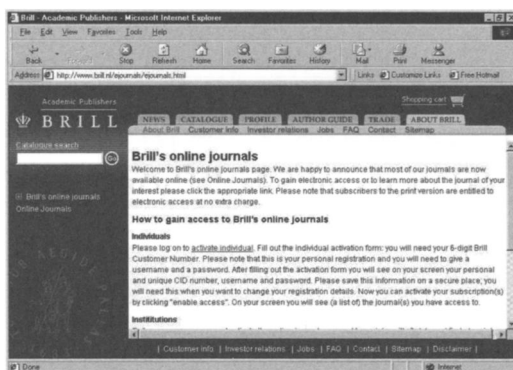
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# THE CHILD MANIFESTATION OF ŚIVA IN CONTEMPORARY HINDU POPULAR PRINTS

KNUT A. JACOBSEN

## *Summary*

God posters have become one of the most visible aspects of popular religious culture in South Asia. In this article I argue that the God poster industry has created opportunities for iconographic innovations, but that the God posters nevertheless build on traditional sacred narratives and conceptions of the Hindu gods found especially in the Hindu epics and the *Purāṇas*. Even if the iconographic representation of the child manifestations of Śiva is something new, these God posters rely on the presence of the child manifestations of Śiva in the sacred narratives of the Hindu tradition. While only some of the episodes of Śiva as a child till now have been depicted in the God posters, it is not unreasonable to expect that more episodes involving the manifestation of Śiva as a child will be depicted in God posters in the future.

During the last one hundred years colourful prints of the Hindu gods, usually called God posters, have become one of the most visible aspects of popular religious culture in South Asia.<sup>1</sup> There is hardly a Hindu home, shop or workshop without one print or more on the wall or on the *pūjā* table.<sup>2</sup> God posters are printed in many different sizes,

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<sup>1</sup> For studies of Hindu God posters see Joshi 1994; Neumayer and Schelberger 2003. For an evaluation of the influence of the God poster industry on Hinduism, see Smith 1995, and Inglis 1995.

<sup>2</sup> The most important use of God posters is for *darśan*, a ritual auspicious viewing of God. The God posters help to make the daily *pūjā* at home possible and they demand much less work than do sculptures and figures. Not all God posters, however, are *darśan* pictures. A second type of posters is the *līlā* poster. They portray various situations from the sacred narratives. In these pictures, in contrast to the *darśan* posters, the eyes of the gods are not looking at the devotee, therefore they cannot be used for *darśan*. In addition to these two types the posters from pilgrimage places (*tīrthas*) are very popular. A fourth category of posters depicts holy persons or illustrates religious doctrines.

also in pocket size, and they are often used in calendars. It is usually recognised that one of the most innovative contributions to Indian iconography of the God posters is in the expansion of the idea of the child-god.<sup>3</sup> God posters portraying Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Hanumān, Gaṇeśa, Murugan, Pārvatī and also Śiva as children are these days available for sale in the market in India and abroad. Even if narratives about the child manifestation of some of these gods may be found in the sacred scriptures of the Hindu tradition, the best known being those of Kṛṣṇa, their portrayals in the God posters are often iconographic innovations. During the last fifteen years posters have been produced depicting Śiva as child. The traditional ways of representing Śiva in sculptures and paintings do not usually include a child manifestation.<sup>4</sup> The God posters of Śiva as a child represent therefore something new (see Figure 1).

It may be tempting to reject God posters of Śiva as child as the free fantasy of the artists, as Hindus, and scholars, when I ask them, often do. The lack of information about Śiva as child also in the academic accounts gives the impression that these God posters depict something totally new, that they are based only on the imagination of the artist. Even Sudhir Kakar in his study of childhood in India (Kakar 1981) does not mention anything about Śiva as child although he makes

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<sup>3</sup> Pal 1997. The child manifestation of Śiva is however not mentioned in the essay.

<sup>4</sup> Śiva is represented in sculptures and pictures in principally five forms. First, he is the Lord of Yoga. As the Lord of Yoga he sits in lotus position on a tiger skin. He has a snake around his neck, the moon in his hair and the river Gaṅgā flows from his matted hair. His second form is as Nāṭarāja, the Lord of dance. He dances within a circle of fire on a dwarf who symbolizes ignorance. The dance expresses Śiva as creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. In his other forms he is usually portrayed together with a woman or a symbol of the female principle. His third form is as a family man portrayed with his wife Pārvatī and the two children Skanda and Gaṇeśa. His fourth form is aniconic. He is represented with the *liṅga*, his sexual organ, and this is his most common manifestation in temples and sacred places in India. Śiva's *liṅga* is placed within a *yonī*, the female sexual organ. This represents the union of Śiva and his female power, Śakti. His fifth form also represents the union of Śiva and Śakti but in anthropomorphic form. In this form called "the God that is half female" (*ardhanariśvara*) he is a person that is half male and half female.



*Figure 1.* God poster depicting Śiva as child.

plenty use of the sacred narratives about Śiva and the study contains a long appendix about the child in Hindu mythological traditions. In this article I document that several narratives of Śiva as a child are found in the epics and the *Purāṇas* and argue that the modern God poster industry which for the first time has made this divine manifestation well known, has based its drawings not only on artistic creativity, but also on knowledge of the sacred scriptures. What is new is the iconographic representations, not the figure depicted.<sup>5</sup> The flourishing God poster industry is depicting a variety of themes and events which were never previously represented in pictures, but the themes and events are nevertheless often from the sacred narratives. Sacred narratives of Śiva as a child are found in the sacred texts of Hinduism and some of the posters do indeed illustrate sacred narratives found in the *Śaiva Purāṇas*. The artists re-actualise themes from the *Purāṇas* and in that way they follow the tradition of the founder of the Hindu God poster industry, Raja Ravi Varma.<sup>6</sup> Śiva as child is known in the

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<sup>5</sup> Joshi writes: "Sometimes it is believed that an artist has unlimited freedom in giving form to the formless. In fact, the choices and imagination of artists are limited. Limits are imposed by the descriptions of the gods and deities found in epics, prayers, hymns, and in other religious texts" (1994:2).

<sup>6</sup> The God poster industry goes back to the artist Raja Ravi Varma (1848–1906) who, influenced by English landscape paintings, made romantic pictures of the Hindu gods and goddesses as they are portrayed especially in the *Purāṇas*. Varma's pictures were first sent to Europe to be printed and the printed pictures were returned to India to be sold there. Varma thereafter started the first printing press for God posters in India. The success of Varma led a series of new artists to produce pictures for the growing God poster industry. The most influential after Varma was C. Kondiah Raju (1898–1976) from Chennai. His pictures were however printed in quite different numbers. While Varma struggled for days to produce a few hundred prints from his press, already in the 1950ies factories could produce several hundred thousand prints a day. Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu became established as the centre for the production of prints and each of the biggest companies there such as Sankareswari, Orient, and Coronation, print more than ten million prints a year. The most productive and popular artists such as M. Ramalingkum, a student of C. Kondiah Raju, who produced over one hundred pictures a year, each printed in more than 100 000 copies, must be one of the most popular artists in the world (see Inglis 1995).

scriptures and the God posters depict several of these stories. What are new, therefore, are the iconographic representations, not the themes as such. The iconographic innovations are more related to technological transformation and less to religious change. Technological innovation, however, has made popular a form of Śiva that previously hardly any Hindus knew about and has therefore influenced contemporary popular conceptions of the god. The child god posters are expressions of the growing popularity of the child manifestations of the gods, especially Kṛṣṇa, in recent times. The child gods often symbolise innocence and benevolence, and their popularity reflects, perhaps, religious change following from increased urbanisation and the growth of the urban middle class.

### *Śiva as a Child*

The child manifestation of Śiva has in fact a Vedic basis. Śiva as child is known already from the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa* 6.1.3, a text which is difficult to date, but is most certainly from before the common era. The name Śiva means “auspicious” and was one of the epithets of the Vedic god Rudra. Rudra might be derived from the Sanskrit root *rud* that means “to cry” or “to howl.” Rudra is the one who cries (*rodati*). The name has perhaps its background in his child manifestation. Rudra in *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa* is identified with Agni and is one of his forms. He is born from Prajāpati. In the later adaptations of this story in the *Purāṇas*, Brahmā becomes Rudra’s father.<sup>7</sup> Prajāpati asked Rudra when he was born, “Why do you cry?” Rudra answered that he cried because he needed a name so that he could be liberated from evil, preferable several names so that he could be liberated again and again. Prajāpati answered, “You are ‘Rudra.’” He receives thereafter eight names that connect him to fire (Agni), water (Sarva), plants (Paśupati), wind (Vāyu), lightning (Asani), rain (Bhava), the moon (Mahādeva), and the sun (Īśana). These are the eight forms of Agni and the child (*kumāra*) is the ninth form. The name Rudra is identified with Agni, fire, so that the final

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<sup>7</sup> See for example *Vāyu Purāṇa* 1.27, part 1, pp. 176–81.

number becomes eight.<sup>8</sup> The child enters the other eight forms, for one never sees the child, only the eight manifestations, the text says. Śiva has, according to the later theological and mythological traditions, eight cosmic forms: water, fire, air, heaven, earth, sun, moon, and the sacrificer. This is Śiva in the shape of the empirical universe, while his child manifestation is hidden, the text says.<sup>9</sup>

*Śiva Manifests Himself as a Child to Fulfil the Wish of the Childless for a Child*

The Vedic Rudra was worshipped partly because he had the power to fulfil the wish for a son.<sup>10</sup> Śiva as *līṅga* is an obvious fertility symbol. Śiva as *līṅga* is therefore worshipped for the sake of increased fertility, also human fertility. Also the manifestation of Śiva as child is connected to the wish of the childless for a child. In the *Skanda Purāṇa* and the *Śiva Purāṇa* the story of the childless Viśvānara and Śuciṣmatī is told.<sup>11</sup> Śuciṣmatī wanted a son, and when she thought about the son she wanted, she realised that she wanted a son who was similar to Śiva, that is, the child image of Śiva appeared to her. Viśvānara thought that it had to be Śiva who had wished this through her and he therefore went to Varanasi, the city of Śiva. There, he worshipped Śiva in the form of a *līṅga* and performed asceticism for a year. He wondered about which *līṅga* to worship as the most efficient means to get a son. The text therefore lists the different *līṅgas* of Varanasi and says

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<sup>8</sup> Rudra is here associated with rain and lightning. This connects him to the shining light and to the fertile water.

<sup>9</sup> There is an interesting connection between the child-god and the organising of the universe. The child-god is the world and is hidden in the world. In the later texts of Kashmir Śaivism, the idea that Śiva is hidden in the world manifestation is emphasised. His participation in the world manifestation is connected to the principle of play (*līlā*), but in this system the mythological aspects of Śiva are not emphasised. For *līlā* in Kashmir Śaivism see Bäumer 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Maity 1989:38.

<sup>11</sup> *Skanda Purāṇa*, Kāśī-khaṇḍa, Pūrvārdha, chapter 10, pp. 90–117; *Śiva Purāṇa*, Śatarudrasaṃhitā, chapters 13–14, pp. 1123–39.



that the most efficient *liṅga* is the Vīreśvara (a name of Śiva) *liṅga*. After having performed the ritual for thirteen months, Viśvānara saw an eight year old boy whose body was smeared with ashes and tangled hair, manifest himself on the Vīreśvara *liṅga*. Viśvānara understood that Śiva had manifested himself in the form of a child and he praised him as the ultimate reality, as having all cosmic functions and as the fulfiller of all wishes and as being old, young and a child all at once. Śiva in the form of a child guaranteed to fulfil the wish of Śuciṣmatī for a son and that he himself would be born as their son in the form of Gṛhapati, “Lord of the house.” The praise that Viśvānara had sung, Śiva said, is such that he who repeats it three times a day will get the wish of a son, a grandchild and riches fulfilled. Thereafter Śiva in the form of the child manifestation was born as the son of Śuciṣmatī and Viśvānara. All kinds of auspicious events marked his birth: flowers fell from heaven, the water in all the rivers became crystal clear, and the air became free from dust, the wind carried pleasant fragrance and the animals also became filled with peace and calmness. All kinds of supernormal beings, sages and gods came to greet the child. The text describes the beautiful child and the pleasure of receiving a child: “Through a child a human being conquers the earth,” and, “A house without a son is empty, both in this life and after death there is nothing better than a son, there is no greater happiness than a son, there is no greater friend than a son.” One God poster (Figure 2) depicts Śiva as a young boy and might be related to this story.

Here the manifestation of Śiva as a child is related to the *liṅga* and the fertility aspect of Śiva. One of the functions of the child manifestation is to give hope to the childless. Persons who wish for a son should therefore worship Śiva as a *liṅga* while they concentrate their thought on the child manifestation of Śiva. The Vīreśvara *liṅga* is still worshipped in Varanasi to fulfil the wish for a son.<sup>12</sup> The only statues of Śiva as a child have been found in Bengal dated from the

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Eck 1982. Eck writes (358): “The ‘Hero’s Lord,’ a self-manifest *liṅga* in which Śiva appeared to a young boy-hero, the foster child of the *mātrikās*. Later, Śiva appeared out of this *liṅga* as a young boy and granted the devout Viśvānara the



Figure 2. Śiva as a young boy.

eleventh century and later.<sup>13</sup> These statues depicting Śiva together with a goddess were connected to the belief that the worship of the child manifestation of Śiva was able to cause the childless to receive a son. The statues should assist the believers to keep the image of Śiva as child in their mind.<sup>14</sup> This is one of the most important functions of the child image of Śiva. The child-god posters of Śiva may similarly have functions connected to human fertility. One God poster (Figure 3) depicting Śiva as child with the *liṅga* seems to belong to this category. Another God poster depicting Śiva and Pārvaṭī as children (Figure 4) might have the same function.

### *Śiva and Anasūyā*

The child manifestation of Śiva as the fulfiller of the wish for a child is also associated with Anasūyā, the famous mother of the god Dattātreya. In the *Purāṇas* it is described that Anasūyā and her husband Atri performed *tapas* to obtain a son and Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, pleased with them, agreed to become their sons.<sup>15</sup> They are born as Soma, Dattātreya and Durvāsas. In a well-known story the same three gods were going to test the chastity of Anasūyā when her husband Atri was absent. They asked her to serve them food while naked. Anasūyā then sprinkled water on them and transformed them into babies. Then she took off her clothes and started breastfeeding them. I have not yet found God posters of this episode, although an artist in Banaras gave me a photograph planned to become a poster in

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boon of a son, who became Vaiśvānara, also known as Agni. Known today as the *Ātmavireśvara*, this *liṅga* is still worshipped for the boon of a son.”

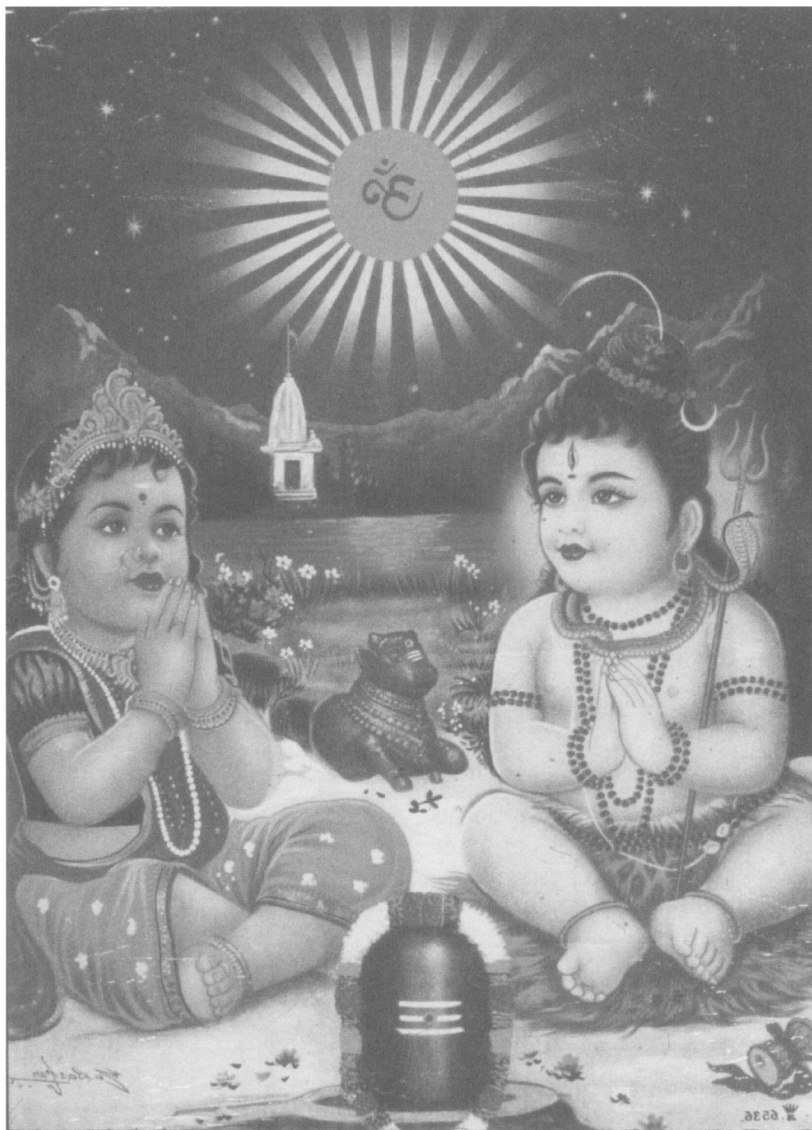
<sup>13</sup> Trivedi 1967.

<sup>14</sup> Such a cultic use of the God posters of Śiva can be found in India today. In the temple of Vindhyavāsini in Vindhyachal, I observed the poster of Śiva as a child on the wall inside the temple. This temple is for the goddess as giver of fertility and riches. It is possible that the poster of Śiva as child was put up to attract persons who performed rituals to get the wish for a son fulfilled.

<sup>15</sup> *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 4.16.6–9; *Śiva Purāṇa*, Śatarudrasaṃhitā 19.24–27; *Skanda Purāṇa* 5.3.103.1–109.



Figure 3. Śiva as child with the *liṅga*.



*Figure 4.* Śiva and Pārvatī as children.

which he had arranged, he said, sleeping Śiva as child on the lap of Anasūyā (Figure 5), with reference to this story.

*Śiva Manifests Himself as a Child to Calm a Furious Goddess*

In several sacred narratives Śiva transforms himself into a child to remove the manifestation of the destructive face of the Goddess. Several God posters illustrate this sacred narrative (Figures 6 and 7).

According to one sacred narrative, Kālī was called on to kill the demon Dārūka who threatened the whole cosmos with destruction.<sup>16</sup> The demon had received the boon that only a woman could kill him. First, Indra and the other gods, dressed as women, tried to kill him, but they were without success. They then went to Śiva and asked him to go to the Goddess and try to convince her to take on the task of killing the demon. Pārvatī, accepting the task, then went into the body of Śiva with a part of herself. From the poison which Śiva always carries in his neck after the churning of the ocean (the reason he is called Nīlakaṇṭha [“blue-necked”]), she made a new body. Śiva thereafter created Kālī from his third eye. Kālī therefore has two parts, one part is from the benign goddess and one part is from Śiva. The part she receives from Śiva is the dangerous world destructive poison. After having seen Kālī all the other gods became extremely frightened and ran away. Kālī thereafter killed Dārūka. The whole universe was shaken by the violence and fury of Kālī. *Skanda Purāṇa* says:

On the cremation ground Avantī Kālī cried several times. Because of this all the living beings of the whole world became dumb and paralysed as if they were dead. Thereafter Rudra took the form of a child to save the universe. Rudra approached her on the cremation ground while he cried. Kālīkā then became full of care, took the child on her lap and nursed him while she said, “Do not cry.” In the disguise of a child being nursed, Śiva consumed the anger that came from her body. (1.2.62.9–12)

The same story is also found in the *Liṅga Purāṇa*:

Bhava became a child because of his magic power (*māyā*) and placed himself on the cremation ground that was full of corpses and ghosts. Īśvara cried there as to

<sup>16</sup> *Liṅga Purāṇa* 1.106; *Skanda Purāṇa* 1.2.62.



*Figure 5.* Śiva as child on the lap of a goddess.

calm the fire in her mind. When the Goddess saw the child who was really Īśana, she was tricked by his creative power (*māyā*). She lifted him up, kissed him on his head and nursed him to her breast. (1.106.21–22)

Śiva transformed himself into a child to manifest the beneficial side of the goddess in order to save the world. Kālī took Śiva in her arms and started to nurse him and at that moment her fury disappeared. Śiva took the destructive poison back to himself so that it again was under his control. After having given up the form of a child, he again appeared as who he really is, he showed himself in the eight forms, i.e. as the universe. These eight forms are the same forms that he received through getting names according to the previously mentioned story in the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Refreshed by the milk of the goddess, Śiva danced the *tāṇḍava* dance in the twilight together with ghosts and other twilight beings.<sup>17</sup> Śiva danced in a fury surrounded by his flocks (*gaṇas*) to the sound of the drums that destroy the universe at the end of a cosmic cycle.<sup>18</sup> The destructive power had again been transferred to Śiva, but also Kālī participated in the dance and the gods paid homage to her. The destructive power of Kālī was now controlled. In the *Skanda Purāṇa* version, the other gods begged Śiva not to abandon his form as a child because they were afraid that Kālī again should become violent. They believed, correctly, that it was the presence of Śiva as a child that turned Kālī into a non-violent mother. But the child answered that the gods should not be afraid of Kālī because she was now kind. Śiva nevertheless created 64 boys whom he placed as protectors (*kṣetrapālas*) against the fury of Kālī. The presence of these children in the world makes sure Kālī manifests her benign side.

In this sacred story, Śiva transforms himself into a child so that the goddess hides her dangerous side and manifests her benign. Śiva becomes a child so that the goddess can become motherly and he can retrieve the poison.<sup>19</sup> In this story, the poison flows from Śiva to his wife so that she can become fierce, and back again to Śiva when her

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<sup>17</sup> Kramrisch 1981:411.

<sup>18</sup> Basham 1954:310.

<sup>19</sup> Kramrisch 1981:411.



work is done so she again becomes benign. When Śiva becomes her son, the Goddess becomes a benign mother and he can retrieve the poison. Thereafter Śiva dances the destructive dance that expresses that the poison is again contained in his body. God poster Figure 6 depicts Śiva as a child, as an adult swallowing poison, and Kālī, and refers to this sacred narrative.

There are other variants of this story. In one version about the swallowing of poison the roles of Śiva and the Goddess are reversed. After Śiva had swallowed the poison, Kālī knew that the only way to save him was for her to nurse him. She could not nurse him, however, since he was her husband. She therefore transformed herself into the goddess Tārā and transformed Śiva into a child and nursed him with her milk to save him. Some of the poison entered the breast and therefore women have a dark ring around the nipple, the story says.<sup>20</sup> God poster Figure 7 might depict this narrative. In both of these stories the poison that came into being when the ocean was churned, is transferred between God and the Goddess. When the poison is transferred both parts are transformed.

#### *Śiva Manifests Himself as a Child Who is Caught by a Crocodile*

According to the *Brahmā Purāṇa*'s narration of the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī, Śiva, making himself ready for the marriage, transforms himself into a child twice.<sup>21</sup> After the arrangement of the "ceremony of selection of husband" (*svayamvara*) had been agreed upon, Śiva bade her farewell after first informing her that he thought her unattainable. Soon after she heard the cries of an unhappy child from the lake close to where she sat. Śiva had taken the form of a child and had entered the lake to play, but once in the lake he had been attacked by a crocodile. The child asked the crocodile for mercy since he was the only child and his parents would kill themselves if he died. But the crocodile pulled the boy further and further ashore. Pārvatī then asked the crocodile to let go of him. The crocodile, as a condition for freeing Śiva, demanded

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<sup>20</sup> McDaniel 1989:89.

<sup>21</sup> *Brahmā Purāṇa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass 1985), part 1, 183–201.



*Figure 6.* Śiva as a child, as an adult swallowing poison, and Kālī, referring to the narrative of the churning of the ocean and how the poison that came into being on that occasion is transferred between the God and the Goddess.



*Figure 7.* Śiva as child and the churning of the ocean.

that Pārvatī should give up all the religious merit she had won through her asceticism. This Pārvatī accepted because, the text says, to save a Brahmin is more important than her own religious merit. I have found no God poster to illustrate this episode. In one God poster (Figure 4) Śiva and Pārvatī are both portrayed as children, but I am not aware of a *Purāṇic* story in which Śiva manifests himself as a child for the child Pārvatī.

### *Śiva Manifests Himself as a Child on Pārvatī's Lap*

After Śiva has played in the water with a crocodile, all the gods come to Pārvatī for her *svayaṃvara*.<sup>22</sup> Before a *svayaṃvara* a woman announced that she would select a husband and males would come to display their powers and riches. During this ceremony Śiva again takes the form of a child. The reason, the text tells us, is to test Pārvatī. Śiva transforms himself into a child and goes to sleep on Pārvatī's lap. The contrast between this and what a man usually does in the *svayaṃvara* is striking. Pārvatī, the text says, "saw the child lying in her lap and with the help of meditation she understood who he was and she become delighted. She received the man she wanted to choose." A mother marries a child. The gods get angry when they see a child lying in the lap of the goddess in what is supposed to be her *svayaṃvara*. They probably think they have been tricked. Indra then tries to kill the child. His hands, however, are paralysed and he is unable to throw his weapon. Brahmā knows that the child is Śiva and he pays homage to him: "You are the unborn lord, you never grow old. You are the creator. You are both *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. You create *prakṛti* and transcend it. This woman (Pārvatī) is *prakṛti* who is your instrument in creation. She has taken the form of your wife and has come to you as the cause of the world." The sleeping child symbolises perhaps the passive *puruṣa* principle. "He is the unchanging *puruṣa*," Brahmā says about him. The Goddess is the active principle and God is the passive witness. The

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<sup>22</sup> This part of the story is found also in *Liṅga Purāṇa* 1.102.

sleeping child is a symbol of the passive self, ultimate reality, while the mother symbolizes the creative principle.<sup>23</sup>

The theme of Śiva as a child on the lap of Pārvatī is found also in the *Mahābhārata*, *Dronaparvan* and *Anuśāsanaparvan*. After Śiva had destroyed the city of Tripurā, Pārvatī came to look at the burning of the city. While she overlooked the city, a boy suddenly appeared on her lap. The Goddess asked the gods who the boy was, but the gods instead of answering the question got violent and tried to kill the boy. As in the previous story, the hands of Indra were paralysed. This also happened to the other gods. They went to Brahmā who said that Śiva had become a child for the sake of Pārvatī. The gods then paid homage to him. Also in the story of Gr̥hapati this theme is found. Viśvānara and Śuciṣmatī are informed that their son might die from Indra's thunderbolt. When the boy was twelve, Indra became angry and threatened to kill the boy. The reason Indra gave for this was that the parents had worshipped Śiva instead of himself. The boy became frightened but Śiva said that the thunderbolt would not harm anyone who is devoted to Śiva. The rivalry between Śiva and Indra is a topic well known in the Hindu mythology. I have not found a poster illustrating this theme, may be because the rivalry between Śiva and Indra is of little concern to contemporary Hinduism.

### *Themes*

Some episodes of the sacred narratives of Śiva as a child have already been depicted in the God posters, and more episodes will probably be depicted in the future. Various themes are encountered in the narratives. Several God posters illustrate Śiva's connection to fertility. A common theme in the sacred narratives is that Śiva becomes a child so that Pārvatī or other women can become mothers. One of the ritual contexts is that Śiva becomes a child so that women who perform *pūjā* to him can become mothers. Śiva as the *liṅga* is connected to fertility and Śiva's rivalry with Indra has also to do with this aspect.

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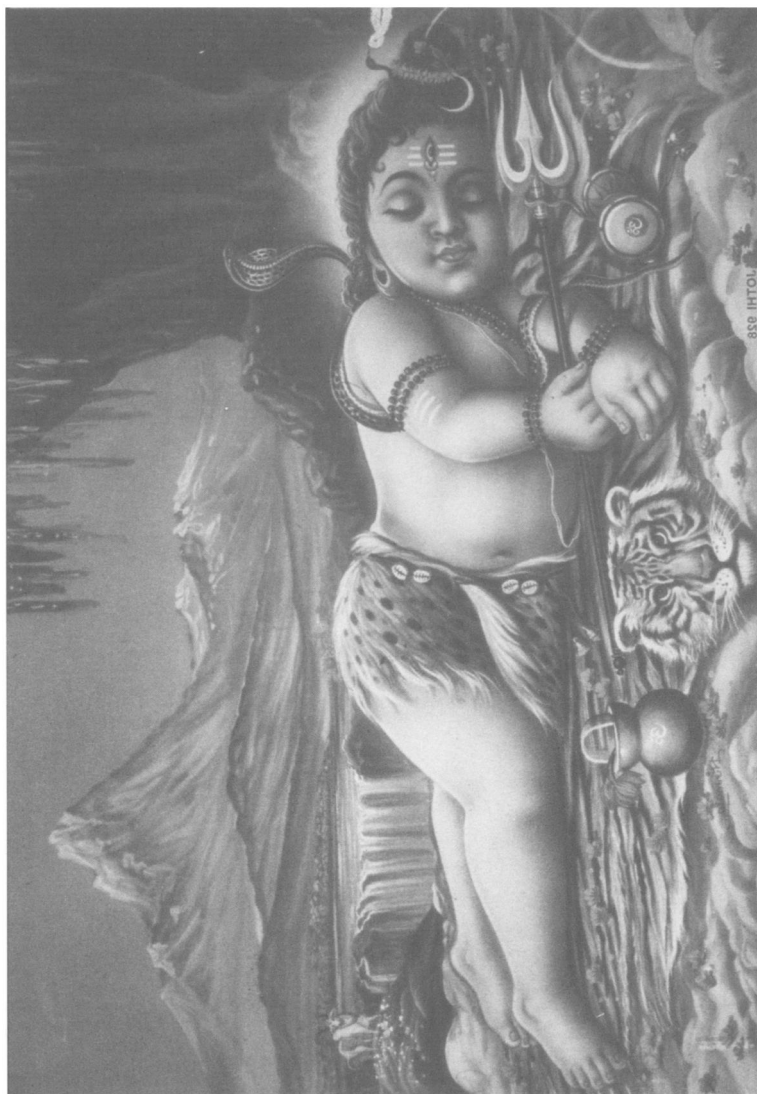
<sup>23</sup> See Jacobsen 1999. In *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* dreamless sleep is seen as the state closest to *ātman*.

Śiva as child exemplifies the principle of divine play, *līlā*.<sup>24</sup> He transforms himself into a child to play in the lake or to make fun of the other gods. The child is specially suitable to symbolise the principle of *līlā*. God does not act because of duty to preserve the world (*dharma*), nor are his acts necessary consequences of previous acts (*karma*), nor does God act because of desire (*kāma*). God acts in spontaneous freedom (*svatantra*). Śiva as a child might illustrate this freedom of the divine. God poster Figure 8, depicting sleeping Śiva as a child, might be related to this theme, the child Śiva lying down to rest after having played.

Even if several episodes from the narratives of Śiva as child are depicted in the posters, Śiva in the narratives appears different from Śiva in the God posters. Śiva as child in the posters looks sweet and innocent like Kṛṣṇa as child. Śiva as child in Figures 1 and 3 seems to convey a vision of Śiva inspired perhaps by the playful innocence depicted in the God posters of Kṛṣṇa as child. Śiva as a child in the narratives, however, does not radiate the innocence of paradise, as child-gods often do. Śiva in several of the narratives is associated with the destructive side of the divine and has a difficult relationship to his wife/mother. Śiva as a child is connected to poison and destruction as well. Even as a child Śiva is involved in balancing the amount of poison in the world, i.e. to control the destructive forces. Several God posters illustrate this theme. Śiva carries the end of the world within himself. Kerényi, in a classical comparative study of the child-god (Jung and Kerényi 1971), writes that the child-god often is related to the sun and the sunrise and the beginning, when creation was new and fresh. This is not valid with respect to Śiva, although he is related in some sacred narratives to the sun, but in the sense of its destructive burning heat. Śiva as a child is connected to the moon. The twilight and the night are his favourite times of the day, and he is connected to the end-time, not

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<sup>24</sup> An alternative to the understanding of the world as illusion (*māyā*) or emptiness (*śūnyatā*) in South Asian religions is the understanding of the world as *līlā*, play. According to this view the world is full of God. The world is then a real manifestation of God and is interpreted as a result of his play.



*Figure 8. Sleeping Śiva as child.*

the beginning. Śiva's *līlā* is exemplified by the *tāṇḍava* dance in which he dances at the cremation ground. Even in his *līlā* he remains the God of destruction.<sup>25</sup>

Śiva's childhood is in the same way as the *liṅga-yoni* and *ardhanārīśvara*, a form of God in union with the Goddess. He constitutes the male half of the unity of the male and the female when he sits on the lap of the goddess. When Śiva transforms himself from man to a child the woman in the relationship is transformed from wife to mother. The mother goddess in Hinduism is ambivalent, she has two principal sides: destructive and creative.<sup>26</sup> The child gives rise to her creative aspect and hides her destructive aspect. By Śiva being transformed into a child, the destructive Kālī becomes transformed into a creative mother. She becomes Tārā or Pārvatī. Śiva's weeping causes Kālī to manifest her motherly affectionate side and then she is no longer dangerous. Several God posters of Śiva as child illustrate this theme. The central theme in the myths about Kālī and Śiva is that Kālī threatens to destroy the world but Śiva saves the world from destruction by taming her. The most common way for this to happen is for Śiva to lie down on the ground. When Kālī recognises him as her husband she becomes calm. Śiva becoming a child is a variation on this theme. The mother has two sides, the destructive and the creative. Śiva as a child reveals

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<sup>25</sup> Kṛṣṇa, the most well known child manifestation, and Śiva exhibit quite different aspects of *līlā*. Kṛṣṇa points to the spontaneous freedom of God, that God is above the rules of society, a world without duties in which God is totally absorbed in his own play without any thought for anything else. He expresses the innocence of childhood. The child is free from ritual duties and is not yet incorporated into society. Kṛṣṇa steals and lies, not because he is evil, but because he is the master of *līlā*, divine play. He is God beyond *dharma*. He belongs to a world without moral or social conventions. As a youth he continues the play, now with the women of Vṛṇḍāvana. Kṛṣṇa's childhood has been understood as a picture of the bliss of paradise. The child Kṛṣṇa, according to David Kinsley, sends a message about the spontaneity and freedom of God, and he radiates "a transcendent aloofness from the world that arises from God's utter self-absorption and self-delight" (Kinsley 1975:18).

<sup>26</sup> Berkson 1995.



the creative side and hides the destructive one.<sup>27</sup> The adult Śiva lies down on the ground and when Kālī sits or stands on him her destructive aspect is hidden by means of her union with the male. As a child Śiva lies down on the ground and weeps so that Kālī hides her terrible side and manifests her benign side. Śiva as a child causes the benign side of the Goddess to become manifest.

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<sup>27</sup> Theorisations inspired from Freud and Jung around mother and child, even if they are not directly connected to Śiva, can perhaps have some value to bring forth some aspects of this mythology. This type of theorising will be interested in a man who is transformed into his wife's weeping child and who is nursed by her. According to Jung, inspired by thinkers such as Erich Neumann and Heinrich Zimmer, a strong independent ego is the goal of the psychic process. The strongest hindrance for this development is a mother who denies her son freedom and independence. The archetype that expresses this aspect of the development, they thought, was the great mother with a weak youth. She shows herself sometimes as terrible and in this way kills the ego. But precisely her repulsive side gives the ego an opportunity for freedom. The Goddess, according to Zimmer, represents a regression to childhood and absence of individuality, and a rejection of values such as individual effort (cf. Kinsley 1975:130). Carmel Berkson (1995), another interpreter of myths who works within this paradigm, building on Freud, Jung and Campbell, has given a Freudian interpretation of Durgā. She interprets the demon fighting Durgā as the son who attempts to fight for freedom from the dominant mother. But when the son attempts to fight, the mother becomes furious and unable of being conquered. If the son again becomes a child and sits on her lap, she becomes the kind mother. I do not want to commit myself to the kind of metaphysics this kind of theorising presupposes, but clearly the transformation of Śiva from adult to child and the simultaneous transformation of the Goddess from terrible to beneficent, has interesting implications. Many of the sacred narratives about Śiva as a child conform to the pattern of these theories. Śiva who lies down on the cremation ground to calm down the terrible Kālī, a woman made of a part of his wife, exemplify these events. The crocodile that pulls Śiva into the water of the lake (the undifferentiated origin of creation) makes Pārvatī give away all the religious merit earned from her asceticism, which belongs to the destructive aspect of the goddess, to become a mother. Śiva returns to his source because water is a female principle of creation in Hinduism. Śiva is then suddenly born by appearing on the lap of Pārvatī in the *svayamvara* ceremony. The goddess was going to witness the presentation of the suitors' powers, but instead became a mother who was to marry a child sleeping on her lap.

Śiva represents the coming together of opposites and alternates between destruction and creation. Pārvatī is also involved in these alternations. She performs asceticism to get Śiva interested in her in order to give birth to a son, Skanda, that is, in order to become creative. The poison that flows between Śiva and Kālī, the subject of several God posters, illustrates how the destructive and creative forces move between them. Śiva carries the poison that would have caused an untimely world dissolution if no-one had offered to carry it. It gets transferred to Pārvatī as a manifestation of Kālī. Pārvatī plus poison becomes Kālī. In order to calm Kālī, Śiva needs to get the poison back. The poison and Pārvatī need to be separated for the world to be preserved. Śiva transforms himself into a child and Kālī because of this becomes benign. Then Śiva can take back the poison from her breast. The poison is a side product of the churning of the ocean and is necessarily present on the earth. It can't disappear although it can move between the God and the Goddess. Someone has to carry the poison to preserve the earth. Śiva saves the world by taking the poison back into his body. He thereby causes the Goddess to become benign. But in another version of the myth the Goddess had to intervene to save Śiva by giving him breast milk as the antidote to the poison of the world. This shows that the God and the Goddess clearly form a unity, as shown in Figures 6 and 7.

### *Conclusion*

The God posters of Śiva as a child are not the result only of the creativity of contemporary artists. Even if Śiva's child manifestations are seldom mentioned in the academic accounts of the mythology of Śiva, narratives of these manifestations are nevertheless found in some of the sacred texts. The textual references and technical interpretations of these narratives given in this article are probably unknown to most Hindus and the success of the God posters of Śiva as a child is not due, probably, to the theological meaning of his manifestation. The recent appearance of the child images of Śiva in the God posters is probably due to the general popularity of the child-god posters. Not only baby Śiva, but Kṛṣṇa, Gaṇeśa, Rāma, Murugaṇ, Hanumān and

others are being pictured as babies in the God posters. The *avatāras* of Śiva in the *Purāṇas* were probably created as imitations of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu in an effort to counter the popularity especially of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. However, the Śiva *avatāras* never became popular like the Viṣṇu *avatāras*. The emergence of Śiva as a child in the popular prints the last fifteen years might be a response to the success of the prints of the child Kṛṣṇa. That the child manifestation of Śiva has now become part of the Hindu iconography is related therefore to the commercial success and interests of the God poster industry. The new medium has provided new opportunities.

The good reception of the child god posters in general might mirror sociological changes in contemporary India. The popularity of the child gods might reflect the rapid urbanisation (one third of India's population now live in cities), increasing economic prosperity, better availability of health services and the growth of the middle class and the television culture. When people move from villages to cities their conceptions of the divine change. When gods and goddesses move from villages to cities their ferocity is often replaced by benevolence and kindness.<sup>28</sup> The iconographic representations of the divinities in the cities in general often appear gentle and benign. Urbanisation also shifts focus from the welfare of the village to the welfare of the family, and especially one's own children. Child gods represent family values. Today, it seems, the child gods express urban, middle class and family values. The child gods often symbolise innocence and purity. The child is a god without anger, he usually does not punish. One approaches him therefore without fear. The child god is a god one approaches with parental love. He represents the innocence of paradise and this aspect of the divine transcendence. The child god is perhaps well suited to attract the urban middle class in a period of economic growth and increased security. The narratives of Śiva as child do not support this interpretation, but his appearance as an innocent child in the god posters does. Most Hindus are probably ignorant of many

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<sup>28</sup> See Padma 2001 for a discussion of this phenomenon with respect to Hindu goddesses.

of the narratives of Śiva as child. The god posters of Śiva as a child owe their success, probably, not to the theological meaning of Śiva's child manifestation as revealed in the narratives, but to the quality and motives of the posters themselves and, perhaps, to the attractiveness of child gods in general.

New themes from the mythology are continuously being represented in the God posters, also themes that were never represented iconographically before. My purpose in this article has been to show that even if the depictions of the child manifestations of Śiva in the God posters represent an iconographical innovation, these God posters rely on the presence of the child manifestation of Śiva in the sacred texts of the Hindu tradition. While only some of the episodes of Śiva as a child till now have been depicted in the God posters, it is not unreasonable to expect that more episodes involving the manifestation of Śiva as a child will be depicted in God posters in the future.

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# BIO-DIVINITY AND BIODIVERSITY: PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IN INDIA

EMMA TOMALIN

## *Summary*

Religious environmentalists argue that religious traditions teach that the Earth is sacred and that this has traditionally served to exert control over how people interact with the natural world. However, while the recognition of “bio-divinity” is a feature of many religious traditions, including Hinduism, this is to be distinguished from religious environmentalism which involves the conscious application of religious ideas to modern concerns about the global environment. Religious environmentalism is a post-materialist environmental philosophy that has emerged from the West and has its roots in the eighteenth century European “Romantic Movement.” Using the example of sacred grove preservation in India, this paper assesses the extent to which claims that Hinduism is environmentally friendly are the product of an elite middle-class environmentalist ideology and hence of little relevance to the majority of Hindus. However, the fact that discourses about sacred grove preservation have become common within discussions about the conservation of biodiversity in India might suggest that religious environmentalism does have a broader relevance. While religious institutions have, on the whole, paid little attention to environmental issues in India, one area where ecological causes have made an impact is within Hindu nationalist groups such as the *Vishva Hindu Parishad* (VHP). This paper concludes with a discussion of the similarities between the historicist strategies of the Hindu Right and religious environmentalism, and discusses the anti-Tehri dam campaign where representatives of both have been involved in protest activity to protect the River Ganges.

## *Introduction*

One theme within contemporary environmentalist discourse concerns the idea that the way in which people treat their natural environment can be related to their religious beliefs and practices. While the majority of studies have tended to emphasise instances where religion is believed to have played a positive and beneficial role in environmental conservation, religion can also act against the interests of

environmental protection (Nelson 1998; Harris 1991). For instance, the Judaeo-Christian tradition is often portrayed as responsible for the “environmental crisis” because of its hierarchical separation of God, humanity and nature (White 1967). Nevertheless, much of the literature that deals with this area of environmentalist thinking depicts religious traditions as inherently “environmentally friendly” (Gottlieb 1996; Banwari 1992).<sup>1</sup> In particular, it is argued that religious traditions teach that the earth is significant beyond its use value to humans (it has “intrinsic value”) because it is sacred. It is claimed that the recognition of this “bio-divinity” has encouraged people to respect the environment and to be careful in their treatment of the natural world (Tomalin 2000, 2002). While “bio-divinity” has been a feature of many religio-cultural traditions throughout history, it is, however, important to distinguish this from what I have called “religious environmentalism” (Pedersen 1995), which involves the conscious application of religious ideas to contemporary concerns about an environmental crisis.

This paper will investigate the relevance of religious environmentalist discourse to India. The Hindu tradition, in particular, has received much attention within religious environmentalist literature with commentators arguing for its innate sensitivity towards the natural world (Dwivedi 1996; Shiva 1988). As Banwari maintains:

We have never thought of nature as inanimate and never did we make the mistake of exploiting it for our benefit. Be it our religious scriptures or literature, everywhere we have been made to realize that nature is something divine. That is why an average Indian has always had an inclination to worship everything in nature. We generally believe that all things in nature need to be preserved and we use them only when we feel that their use is essential for the continuity and preservation of our life (1992:7).

Despite such a strong assertion that Hinduism has always taught people to be environmentalists, this paper questions a straightforward

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<sup>1</sup> There are examples of groups and individuals, in both developed and developing countries, that aim to develop links between environmentalist thinking and religion in order to arrest further ecological damage. For instance, the Alliance for Religion and Conservation (ARC) based in Manchester, in the UK (see Tomalin 2000).



equation between the recognition of bio-divinity and a concern for environmental sustainability. Although the concept of bio-divinity easily finds support from within the Hindu tradition, there is an immense difference between the priorities and concerns of the modern environmentalist and the world-views of much earlier Hindu sages, poets and philosophers. Moreover, one must also question the extent to which Hindus in modern India, many of whom have little or no knowledge of the language and concepts central to contemporary environmentalist thinking, actually share the religious environmentalist's goal of ecological sustainability.

In order to address these issues, I will investigate one area where religion has entered the environmental debate in India. My analysis will be concerned with the protection of sacred groves, which, it is claimed, have traditionally been preserved due to the influence of religious beliefs that restrict human interference. Using examples from my own fieldwork, as well as a review of existing literature, I will discuss the extent to which discourses surrounding the relationship of sacred groves to nature conservation comprise a narrow and elite middle-class agenda or have a broader relevance to those living in their environs.

While, on the whole, religious environmentalists tend to leave one with an inflated impression of the contribution of Hinduism towards fostering a natural ecological awareness, one area where religion has recently entered the environmental debate is from within the Hindu nationalist movement. To date, this emerging phenomenon has received little academic attention and this paper will conclude with a discussion of the campaign against the Tehri dam, located on the River Ganges in the Himalayas, which has attracted affiliates of the *Vishva Hindu Parishad* (VHP) as well as ecological activists (Rajalakshmi 2001). I will argue that this interest in environmental issues, such as the fate of the River Ganges from within the Hindu Right, is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has certainly raised the profile of the anti-Tehri dam campaign but, on the other hand, as Sharma cautions, the type of discourse we find within religious environmentalism is potentially dangerous because of its use of "ideologies and languages

that can only aid the growth of Hindu communalism in India” (Sharma 2002).

### *The Origins of Religious Environmentalism*

It is important to emphasise the fact that “religious environmentalism” is a modern phenomenon dating back no further than the 1960s and the birth of the modern environmental movement (Macnaghten and Urry 1998:50–51; Merchant 1992; Pepper 1994). Contrary to this, there is a tendency for religious environmentalists to portray pre-industrial communities as inherently environmentalist. Integral to this “myth of primitive ecological wisdom” (Milton 1996:109) are assumptions about the existence of an “eco-golden age” (that was maintained because of religious beliefs and practices) when people lived in harmony with their natural environment. This, however, is considered to have been lost due to the globalisation of the capitalist mode of production and the spread of secularisation. While all religious traditions can be interpreted in a way that supports environmentalist thinking, and there are numerous examples where religion has served to preserve natural features, it is anachronistic to claim that religious traditions are inherently environmentally friendly or that the people who practiced them were environmentalists (Pedersen 1995; Milton 1996; Tomalin 2000, 2002). I do not point out this anachronism with the intention of dismissing religious environmentalism as some sort of fallacy. Religious traditions constantly re-invent themselves precisely through making claims about the past in order to accommodate new ideas. Moreover, all social movements, including the environmental movement, operate through the appeal to ideologies that rest upon partial interpretations of historical events and personalities.

However, the de-construction of narratives about religions and the environment is an important step in understanding the dynamics of global environmentalism and the networks it supports. Such analytical work is necessary in order to separate facts about the state of the global environment and the nature of people’s concerns from the discourses that have evolved about them. At the very least it will contribute towards loosening the hold that elite ideologies have over

the interpretation of “subaltern” needs.<sup>2</sup> For instance, in addition to being modern, religious environmentalism is originally a western discourse. It is a legacy of the eighteenth century European Romantic vision of nature as a realm of purity and intrinsic value that evolved in reaction to the mechanisation and industrialisation of the natural world (Tomalin 2000; Merchant 1992). While religious environmentalist discourse has an appeal that extends across the globe, its tendency to universalise and to consider ecological awareness as authentically religious masks its parochial genesis.

*The “Romantic” Perspective: is Hinduism Really Environmentally Friendly?*

All representations of “the environment” hide power relations and employ certain knowledge systems above others. Guha, for instance, considers that the depiction of Indian religio-cultural traditions as inherently “biocentric” is inaccurate and anachronistic, telling “us far more about the Western commentator and his desires than about the ‘East’ ” (1989:77). Biocentrism, or “ecocentrism,” is the belief that the Earth not only has a value beyond its use value to humans (intrinsic value) but also that humans ought not to act in such a way as to interfere in natural processes. While this environmental philosophy has its roots in western ecological traditions, such as Deep Ecology (Naess 1973; Devall and Sessions 1985; Bradford 1989), or the writing of the earlier American wilderness thinker Aldo Leopold<sup>3</sup> who is frequently depicted as a proto-Deep Ecologist, there is a tendency for biocentrism to be seen as “natural” to India.

However, this is not just an issue of hermeneutical accuracy for its own sake but has wider implications. To depict the poor as “ecologically wise” can lead to a distorted view of their actual priorities

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<sup>2</sup> “Subaltern” refers to the lower classes, specifically peasant classes.

<sup>3</sup> In 1949 he published *The Sand County Almanac*, in which he advocated his famous “Land Ethic”: “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (Leopold 1968:224–25).

and goals for the future (Baviskar 1997). Guha considers that biocentrism has been “imported” to India with dubious effect. In particular, he draws our attention to the way in which it has influenced attitudes towards nature within Indian environmentalism that call for the preservation of “wilderness” and the creation of national parks (Guha 1989; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997:106; Baviskar 1999:22). There is a tension between depictions of the poor in India as “inherent environmentalists” and a view that they are to blame for the destruction of the natural environment. As Baviskar sums up: “only when local people are presented not as ‘poor villagers who destroy the environment to make both ends meet’ but as ecologically wise ‘adivasis’ or ‘hill people’ is there likely to be some sympathetic consideration of their rights” (2001:10).

The conclusions I have drawn from my own research echo the findings of indigenous commentators such as Guha and Baviskar.<sup>4</sup> The idea that Hinduism is environmentally friendly, and that recognition of the sacredness of the Earth can be a solution to a perceived environmental crisis, draws upon a first-world or post-materialist understanding of environmental issues where the Earth is considered to have “intrinsic value” (Inglehart 1977, 1995). By contrast, the ethic of the “intrinsic value” of nature is difficult to find in developing countries such as India where the majority of people cannot afford to put the “Earth first” (Tomalin 2002; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997). Nevertheless, there are environmentalists in India who readily employ this post-materialist religious environmentalist rhetoric, arguing that India has a long tradition of care for nature, which has only recently been broken due to the western influences of colonialism and consumerism. For example:

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<sup>4</sup> This paper draws upon a series of fieldwork visits to India in 1997 and 1998 to investigate links between religion and contemporary environmentalism. The material used in the section “Sacred Groves: repositories of biodiversity or hotspots of biodiversity?” reflects a series of interviews I conducted, mainly with ecologists, concerning their views about the role of sacred groves in nature conservation. This research was carried out with financial assistance from the British Academy and a Leverhulme Trust “Study Abroad Studentship.”

In the past Hindus and Buddhists were careful to observe moral teachings regarding the treatment of nature. . . . But now in the twentieth century, the materialistic orientation of the West has equally affected the cultures of the East (Dwivedi 1996:151).

In the ancient spiritual traditions, man was looked upon as a part of nature, linked by indissoluble spiritual and psychological bonds with the elements around him. This is very much marked in the Hindu tradition, probably the oldest living religious tradition in the world . . . the natural environment also received close attention from the ancient Hindu scriptures. Forests and groves were considered as sacred, and flowering trees received special reverence. . . . The Hindu tradition is full of reverence for nature and all forms of life, vegetable or animal, and represents a powerful tradition which needs to be re-nurtured and re-applied in our contemporary context (WWF 1986:17–19).<sup>5</sup>

What is notable in these excerpts is the romantic view of the contribution that the Hindu tradition has made towards the protection of the environment in the past, as well as a very optimistic opinion about the role Hinduism might play in averting future environmental destruction.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, there is an overly simplistic analysis of the reasons behind environmental problems in India with the appeal to an East/West dichotomy (characteristic of post-colonial critique) obscuring the class, caste or gender basis of resource exploitation and uneven access to natural resources.

Those who hold such a religious environmentalist position in India are far more likely to be middle-class, as well as upper-caste, than “subaltern”; they have access to and draw upon environmentalist ideas that are global rather than local in focus, and speak about nature in a way that goes beyond its use value (Baviskar 1999:24). This is not to say that the middle classes do not respond to environmental destruction when it impinges on their day-to-day life. It is rather to suggest that the poor are less likely to respond to environmentalist pleas that the earth

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<sup>5</sup> This excerpt is part of the Hindu contribution to the 1986 Assisi Declarations when five of the world religions joined together to collectively express the environmentalist nature of their traditions.

<sup>6</sup> For a more critical approach see selected essays in Nelson (1998), Chapple and Tucker (2000), Callicott and Ames (1991), Bruun and Kalland (1995).

has intrinsic value, even if this can be translated into familiar traditions and teachings. The fact that the Hindu tradition can be interpreted to support environmentalist thinking tells us little about attitudes towards nature held either in the past or the present by the majority of Hindus. It is important to realise that religious environmentalism offers an *interpretation of tradition* and not a *traditional interpretation*. Thus, if religious environmentalism fits the pattern of middle-class environmentalism in India, or the “full-stomach” environmentalism of the North, can it ever be meaningfully linked to the “environmentalism of the poor,” or the “empty-belly” environmentalism of the South (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997:xxi)? Is religious environmentalist discourse a purely romantic ideology removed from the lives and experiences of most people living in India, or does it have a wider relevance?

I am highly sceptical about the value and relevance of an elite religious environmentalism that romanticises and valorises the beliefs and practices of subaltern communities. Nevertheless, the fact that Hindu, as well as pre-Hindu traditions, are resplendent with references towards nature and promote practices that have served to protect features of the natural world, suggests that religious environmentalism ought not to be dismissed completely. However, whether such traditions can be translated into ethics and action that promote environmental preservation cannot be assumed. For instance, people worship the River Ganges as the goddess *Ganga Ma* and consider that she is sacred, but this high religious value that is placed upon the river is not translated into environmental values. While people bathe in the Ganges to remove “impurities” it seems as though little distinction is made between ritual and material impurity. Although *Ganga Ma* herself has an infinite capacity to remove ritual impurities, and remains ritually pure, the ecological health of the river is suffering from the failure to seriously consider that there is a limit to the volume of material wastes the river can effectively carry away. Thus, the high regard with which people hold *Ganga Ma* tends to lead them to the conclusion that there is nothing they can do to harm or pollute her (Alley 1998, 2000).

While features of the natural world emerge as a focus within Hindu religious belief and practice, any assessment of the extent to which such elements of the tradition can actually be translated into ethics and action that serve the interests of environmental conservation, needs to be carried out with careful reference to specific situations. The fact that normative ethics prescribing environmentally friendly behaviour can be easily sourced from the Hindu tradition tells us nothing about whether or not people will be willing or able to actualise those ethics. As Baviskar writes: “all belief systems are embedded in social and political structures; simply appealing for a change of heart is not enough. If an ecologically sound way of life is to be brought about, the arrangements for extraction and exploitation need to be transformed” (1999:27).

Although environmental projects that are based upon religion are relatively few and far between, one area that has received attention concerns the preservation of sacred groves (Gadgil and Vartak 1974a, 1974b, 1981; Gadgil 1989; Gadgil and Chandran 1992; Chandran and Hughes 1997; Chandrakanth and Nagaraja 1997; Ramakrishnan 1996; Ramakrishnan *et al.* 1998; Apffel-Marglin and Mishra 1993; Apffel-Marglin and Parajuli 2000; Kalam 1996; Khurana 1998; Nirpunge *et al.* 1988). To this day one can find patches of forest all over India that have been protected due to religious custom, “sometimes as much as twenty hectare in extent” (Gadgil and Vartak 1974b:152). In comparison to surrounding agricultural land, these *refugia* are described as “hotspots of biodiversity,” both in terms of the age and range of species, and are claimed to be of ecological significance to the locality in providing watershed functions or, in the case of larger groves, helping to regulate the climate (Ram Manohar 1997). Thus, whilst communities farmed the surrounding land for their daily needs, the groves themselves are depicted as having remained more or less untouched, where even “the removal of even a small twig, is taboo” (Gadgil and Vartak 1981:273). As M.G. Nagaraja, a local campaigner for the preservation of sacred groves (*devarakadus*), explained with respect to sacred groves in Coorg (a region in Karnataka, South India):

Every *devarakadu* will have a god, a sanctum. . . . So around that sanctum or temple the forest is maintained. . . . The people never cut the trees, they never take the leaves and not even a single branch will be wasted, it will be retained in the forest itself. If a tree has died because of the old age it will be made to fall there alone and this man will not touch it, he will not cut it. . . . In India this tradition is strong, particularly the god adoration mentality is strong here. So therefore wherever the trees that grow around the temple, or the sanctum, he doesn't cut, he leaves. The sacred forests are maintained.<sup>7</sup>

This is echoed by the director of an environmental NGO in Virajpet, Coorg:

So these *devarakadus*, no one used to really take anything from them. They were pristine undisturbed forests, not even fire-wood would be collected. This is why you still have these virgin forests, literally 'hotspots of biodiversity,' because it hasn't been disturbed.<sup>8</sup>

The following section of this paper will assess the discourses surrounding the relationship between the ancient institution of the sacred grove and environmental conservation. To what extent are they the product of an elite environmentalist ideology or do they have a broader relevance?

### *Sacred Groves: Repositories of Bio-divinity or Hotspots of Biodiversity?*

While examples of these "pristine forests" still exist across India, they are dwindling in number due to a range of factors. For example, in Coorg from 1905 to 1985 the extent of sacred groves, or *devarakadus*, shrunk from 15,506 to 6,299.61 acres because of "encroachments, denudation, acquisition for coffee cultivation and other commercial purposes" (Kalam 1996:25–26). However, many of the people I inter-

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<sup>7</sup> Interview 1/5/97, Bangalore. Pradip Saha, Managing Editor of the Indian ecology magazine *Down To Earth*, suggested to me that sacred groves which are located on a steep gradient, tend to house more malevolent and ferocious deities than other groves. This is because such a forested hillside serves a particularly important ecological function to the land below and the more malevolent the deity the greater the deterrent against interfering in the grove (personal conversation 20/08/03).

<sup>8</sup> Interview 11/2/98, Virajpet, Coorg.



viewed also considered that sacred groves are decreasing because of the dilution of traditional values, westernisation and migration. As a postgraduate student from the University of Agricultural Sciences in Bangalore put it:

Basically underlying this one is the greed you see. It is due to materialism and the influence of western culture. Because of that we have lost our values and culture. . . . These things wouldn't have happened ten years back, twenty years back — it was unthinkable. Today they are encroaching, tomorrow the sacred groves will be denuded.<sup>9</sup>

While agreeing with this depiction, his tutor, Professor M.V. Chandrakanth, also stressed that for migrants who come to work on the plantations “there is no sacredness of the forest. It is only for the Coorg people, because of their culture. . . . Those who migrate from outside, even from Kerala, they just don't have any feeling.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus, with respect to Coorg, the commercialisation of the land has led to a transformation in “traditional” farming practices and has brought changes to the institution of the sacred grove. Before the introduction of coffee into the region by the British in 1854, Coorg was almost completely covered with forest and in its Eastern region with thick jungle (Pouchepadass 1990:6). Thus, the land upon which the sacred groves stand acquired a new economic value and, while state level instruments theoretically exist to prevent encroachment, many feel that politics and economics often get in the way of serious attempts to protect sacred groves across the country. Crucially, in Coorg, for instance, as one local environmentalist points out, “there is a dispute about whom the land belongs to, whether it is to the revenue department or the forest department”<sup>11</sup> and this has slowed down measures to protect the remaining sacred groves in the region.

In order to understand the significance of this dispute, we need to look back to the British designation of forests into different types

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<sup>9</sup> Interview 30/1/97, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

<sup>10</sup> Interview 30/1/97, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

<sup>11</sup> Interview 11/2/98, Virajpet, Coorg.

under the Forest Act of 1865 (Pouchepadass 1990:10). It is reported that the British considered sacred groves to be a “contrivance” on the part of villagers to deny the state from claiming their rights over all forest lands (Chandran and Hughes 1997:423). Mr Thamiah, of the Deputy Commissioner’s office, Madikeri, Coorg, explained to me that some sacred groves were classified as “reserve forest” (a class of forest that was closed to all uses except those licensed by the state) while others were designated as “protected forests” (a class of forest that could be used for small-scale activities such as timber and fuel collection, or grazing).<sup>12</sup> Where sacred groves became “protected forests” communities found that they could no longer restrict access to what had once been communally regulated lands (Chandran and Hughes 1997:422). In Coorg sacred groves became classified as “protected forests” in 1905, placed under the control of the Revenue Department,<sup>13</sup> and have been heavily encroached (Kalam 1996:51). Although since 1985 there have been moves to reassign land that has not been heavily encroached (including *devarakadus*) to the category of “reserve forest,” which would place it under the control of the Forest Department, these transferences are slow in coming, with many blaming the Karnataka Government for bowing to pressure from powerful plantation owners (Sharma 2003). According to Mr Thamiah:

There is a move to convert it into reserve forest. Reserve forest means that everything is prohibited even hunting, felling of trees: everything is prohibited. It is not reserve forest now, it is village forest.<sup>14</sup> . . . At the moment it belongs neither to the Forest Department or to the Revenue Department. It is like that now. But the forest authorities are conducting a survey and they may take it shortly. . . . [However,] they can’t declare the *devarakadu* as reserve forest if it is under encroachment. . . . What is the good of declaring it *devarakadu* if it

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<sup>12</sup> Interview 9/2/98, Madikeri, Coorg.

<sup>13</sup> The Revenue Department collects taxes on land belonging to the government.

<sup>14</sup> A category of protected forest (Pouchepadass 1990:18). Chandrakanth and Nagaraja write that most *devarakadus* in Coorg are *paisari devara kadu*: “owned by the government, and are jointly managed by the village and the government” (1997:220).

is fully under cultivation, fully encroached by some people? . . . The government can take action but the encroachers in some cases are very poor, if they are thrown out of the land it would be very difficult for them.<sup>15</sup>

While there is evidence to suggest that the absorption of sacred groves into secular management programmes has in many cases contributed to their decline, other scholars have pointed out that the use of sacred groves can change over time for religious reasons. For instance, the deities that live in sacred groves tend to be uniconic and not housed within any structure (Gadgil and Vartak 1974b:156). However, as Gadgil explained:

We have done a study relating to sacred groves to show how when the Brahmin priests take control of deities located in sacred groves they deliberately tend to replace the worship of trees, of natural objects, by idols. They want to cut down the forest and use the money to construct a temple. . . . As you come from the more remote villages to those which have better communication . . . the low caste indigenous priesthood is taken over by the Brahmin priests and when the Brahmin priests take over, and more sort of institutionalised religion comes into play, the worship of nature gives way to worship of idols in the temple and the sacred groves tend to be cut down.<sup>16</sup>

Although many commentators view the shift to Brahmanical religion as undermining more localised indigenous religio-cultural practices which preserved sacred groves intact, other scholars argue that this depiction may actually be misleading. While this process of *sanskritisation* has meant that some encroachments may be carried out “on behalf of the divine” (Kalam 1996:51), in order to build temples to keep up with the changing times (Gadgil and Chandran 1992:187; Chandran and Hughes 1997:420), it cannot be assumed that the authentic form of the sacred grove is as “pristine forest” (Jeffery 1998).

Freeman’s research on sacred groves (*kavus*) in Kerala, suggests that sacred groves have always taken a variety of forms that do not necessarily coincide with the modern environmentalist’s idea of

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<sup>15</sup> Interview 9/2/98, Madikeri, Coorg.

<sup>16</sup> Interview 4/2/97, Indian Institute for Science, Bangalore.

“pristine relics from a primeval past” (1994:11). He writes that a “*kavu* may indeed result from the dedication of a patch of virgin forest to a deity, but I also know of those developed from what was once a stand of cultivated toddy-palms, from small stands of shrubbery on laterite hillocks, and in one case, from an old tank in the middle of paddy fields” (1994:11). Moreover, a “*kavu* may refer to a temple that no longer has any associated grove, [thus] the semantic weight of the term rests with the dedication of the site to a deity, rather than with the flora of the site, *per se*” (1994:12 n.14). The purpose of sacred groves is to provide a pleasure garden for the use of the deity and, whilst encroachment according to human needs is forbidden, it is often the case that “what we might regard as human disturbance, resource exploitation, and encroachment are happily accommodated within the cultural framework of the grove as the deities’ preserve” (1994:11).

Freeman, in particular, has argued against the tendency of much discourse around the subject of sacred groves to assume, or at least to give the impression of, the existence of an ideal type of sacred grove as “pristine forest” (1994:9 n.11). He challenges the writing of Gadgil and Vartak (1981) as particularly vulnerable to this type of oversimplification. While their work generally concentrates upon the Western Ghats there is a tendency for it to read as though they are making more general points about sacred groves throughout India. Gadgil and Vartak are, however, by no means the only scholars whose work seems to generalise about certain features of sacred groves. Writing on sacred groves easily lends support to religious environmentalist discourse, where practices such as preserving sacred groves are seen as evidence of a “primitive ecological wisdom” that predates colonial interference in natural resource management on the sub-continent.

By contrast, Freeman’s research suggests that any protection of biodiversity was coincidental rather than intentional and that sacred groves were protected out of respect for the deity rather than because of an innate belief in the intrinsic value of nature. As Kalam points out: “where was the need to preserve/conservate the forests as there was

no danger at all of depletion of forest resources?" (1996:52).<sup>17</sup> This romantic belief that religious practices have preserved sacred groves intact has lead people to believe that they are rather more extensive than they actually are, with the effect of failing to realise the extent of their decline. According to Kalam, writing in *Coffeeland News*, a local Coorg publication:

Till my 1996 publication *Sacred Groves in Kodagu District of Karnataka (South India): A Socio-Historical Study*, many people sincerely believed that the *Devarakadus* were indeed preserved and were in a good shape. Some even thought that being gods'/deities' abodes these were in fact conserved in almost virgin climax form. Such beliefs were subscribed to not only by the lay people but also by social and natural scientists (Kalam 2000).

Nevertheless, there are many commentators who employ modern concepts to describe and explain the purpose and use of sacred groves in the past, or they embark upon a romantic eulogy about a lost "eco-golden age." For instance, Chandran and Hughes make the unlikely claim that, "sacred groves belong to a variety of cultural practices which helped Indian society maintain *an ecologically steady state* with wild living resources" (1997:418, my emphasis). Similarly anachronistic is the assertion by Chandrakanth and Nagaraja that, "wherever a *devara kadu* has been preserved well by the village communities, there has been the altruistic motive and the recognition that birds and animals *also have rights*" (1997:223, my emphasis). Other scholars and activists take a less romantic perspective. For instance, Professor P.S. Ramakrishnan<sup>18</sup> accepts that there are two viewpoints: those who consider that people were aware of the ecological value of conserving sacred groves and those who consider that environmental preservation was a by-product of conserving sacred groves for religious reasons. However, rather than attempting to resolve this difference of opinion

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<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the protection of sacred groves does not match modern ecological thinking as it only affords protection to particular areas of nature rather than the entire natural environment.

<sup>18</sup> School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

he concludes: "without getting into this controversy of what is the reason behind, it I am interested in looking at it from a contemporary perspective in what way can we make use of it."<sup>19</sup>

In line with this thinking, a number of the ecologists that I interviewed explained how they had become interested in sacred groves through a scientific and pragmatic interest in conservation. For instance, Madhav Gadgil told me how he had been studying sacred groves since 1973: "I'm an ecologist and I was interested in finding examples of undisturbed, well preserved natural vegetation . . . the best examples, strikingly, were some of the sacred groves."<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Dr K.G. Saxena<sup>21</sup> claimed to be interested in:

the function of sacred groves in the environmental perspective, how sacred groves are related to the social mechanisms of resource users, restraints placed by society upon resource use. . . . *The fundamental objective or challenge these days is in what way you promote sustainable resource management.* . . . Instead of commanding and controlling the people you build on religion, culture. So that is one way of mobilising people's participation.<sup>22</sup>

Ramakrishnan echoed this concern to make use of traditional beliefs and practices. He explained that when he first went to work in the North East of India, twenty-five years previously, he was interested in why the government's development and conservation projects had largely failed: they were "rejected by the local people." He soon noticed, however, that there were small patches of forest that had been preserved: "a few hectares to a few square kilometres which are protected by local communities . . ."<sup>23</sup> He became interested to:

try to see what are the possibilities in terms of building upon this traditional knowledge base . . . in order to be able to define a strategy which adheres with the value system of the local communities [so that] they have a sense of participation in the process of development rather than something being imposed

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<sup>19</sup> Interview 24/4/98, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

<sup>20</sup> Interview 4/2/97, Indian Institute for Science, Bangalore.

<sup>21</sup> School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

<sup>22</sup> Interview 24/4/98, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

<sup>23</sup> Interview 24/4/98, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

from outside. . . . When I went there, and I started working on my mundane biological, ecological problems, every time I started working on it I hit against the human dimension. . . . In whatever bits and pieces I could pick up, and among a whole variety of things that I did, the cultural dimensions of ecology became an important concern.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the scientific community and conservation bodies are beginning to take this system of “indigenous nature preservation” seriously (e.g. Jamir and Pandey 2003; Upadhaya *et al.* 2003; Ramanujam and Cyril 2003; Ramanujam and Kadamban 2001). Ramanujam and Kadamban note, for example, with respect to their study of plant biodiversity in two forests near Pondicherry, South India, that the forest that had been maintained as a sacred grove was “more species rich” (2001:1203) than the other forest that had “lost the status of a sacred grove because of its conversion to Eucalyptus plantations” (2001:1203). They conclude that, “the concept of sacred groves appears to be an efficacious tool in biodiversity conservation worth continuing into the next millennium” (2001:1215).

However, it is important to note that from a scientific or conservationist perspective, the study of sacred groves forms one of the components of a broader concern with sustainable development and the preservation of biodiversity. Religious values in themselves are not generally seen as having any necessary role to play. As the director of an environmental NGO in Virajpet Coorg argued:

Protecting and preserving *devarakadus* merely for superstitious beliefs does not bear relevance in this modern age . . . training at the grass roots level would help spread the message of the necessity to protect these *devarakadus* for scientific reasons. (Belliappa 1998)

While members of the scientific/conservation community are not immune to holding romanticised views about the role that religion played in conservation in the past (or about the authentic form of sacred groves as “pristine forests”), they are more likely to consider that religious institutions are in decline and that it is the job of the

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<sup>24</sup> Interview 24/4/98, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

ecologist to find other ways of preserving the biodiversity of the sacred groves. Although some of the scientists I have spoken to genuinely lament the decline in traditional values about the forest, others are not so concerned and are happy to promote the introduction of secular management programmes to preserve the remaining groves.

By contrast, the examples of religious environmentalism discussed at the start of this paper not only hold romanticised views about the role that religion played in conservation in the past, but that religion has a special and unique role to play in averting environmental problems more widely. However, individuals that adhere to this “strong” or “romantic” version of religious environmentalism are also more likely to be religious themselves and to have a personal view of the Earth as sacred. Thus, a “strong” or “romantic” version of the discourse can be contrasted with a “weak” or “pragmatic” expression. While the former is committed to pursuing a religiously inspired environmentalism, the latter considers that religion played a role in protecting biodiversity in the past but that this is less relevant in the modern age (except where it is still strong or as a means of encouraging participation in environmental projects). Moreover, whereas the strong version of the discourse believes that sacred groves ought to be protected because they are divine and, therefore, intrinsically valuable, the weaker, scientific/pragmatic expression is more interested in preserving biodiversity for its long-term practical benefits and for scientific interest.

Whilst this is a goal that should be encouraged in a country such as India, where huge swathes of indigenous forest continue to be denuded year by year, it cannot be assumed that the goals of scientific conservation will necessarily match the cultural and economic needs of local communities, particularly where these deny any human interference whatsoever. We need to ask why sacred groves ought to be preserved intact: whose interests does such a goal serve? While one might assume that the practical work of ecologists is more likely to benefit people than the romantic vision that religion can liberate people from ecological disaster (because religious traditions teach that the Earth has intrinsic value), it must be remembered that scientific ecology is not a neutral enterprise. It makes use of elite



discourses that employ sophisticated language and concepts that often have little relevance to the environmentally illiterate. In fact, where conservationists of both the romantic and the pragmatic types are keen to prevent any kind of interference in sacred groves, traditional religious practice has allowed people to use the forest in line with the wishes of the deity, even to the extent of clearing the grove and erecting a temple. Thus, it is not only environmentalists who are explicitly eco-centric (i.e. believe that nature has intrinsic value), who express the ethic of wilderness conservation, discussed at length by Guha (1989). It is also reflected in the thinking of more scientific and instrumental attitudes towards conservation, where sacred groves are of interest because of the protection of rare species that have medicinal properties or for their wider ecological function.

While discussions about the preservation of sacred groves are making an impact at the level of scientific conservation, religious institutions in India are much less concerned with environmental degradation than the more romantic religious environmentalists would lead us to believe. However, one area within mainstream religion in Indian where ecological issues are beginning to make an impact is amongst some affiliates of the Hindu Right. The remainder of this paper will discuss the way in which religious environmentalist discourse in India closely resembles the historicist strategies employed by the Hindu Right. I will investigate the extent to which it is possible to distinguish between those who employ such "orientalist" or "neo-traditionalist" (Sinha *et al.* 1997) readings of Hinduism out of a genuine concern for the natural environment and those who eulogise about a grand Hindu past as a means of bolstering a divisive and aggressive nationalist agenda.

### *Environmentalism and the Hindu Right*

The writing of environmental history in Indian has largely occurred within the context of post-colonial critique (e.g. Gadgil and Guha 1993; Shiva 1988). While the writing of Grove (1998), in particular, has attempted to debunk the idea that the British colonialists were completely unconcerned about ecological issues, such as deforesta-

tion, blame for the destruction of India's forests, for instance, has been consistently and uncritically traced to the British greed for timber. Sivaramakrishnan describes Indian scholarship on the environment as "caught up in the critique of colonialism, the nation state, development and the transitions to capitalism that engrossed a wider nationalist and postcolonial historiography" (2003). However, in the search for an authentically Indian environmental history, many scholars of the environment in India have engaged in a process of romanticising and essentialising the past that has similarities with the narrow construction of history that bolsters the nationalist movement (Chakrabarty 2000). Again, according to Sivaramakrishnan, environmental historians have been "instrumental in propagating a strategically essentialist, celebratory, indigenism (inspired equally by Gandhian ideas and romantic primitivism). This perspective has on occasion stimulated ethnonationalism, regionalism, and forms of religious nationalism drawing upon the romanticized precolonial/premodern subject and society that they evoke in their writings" (2003).

For instance, the "ecological niche" theory of caste (Gadgil and Guha 1993; Gadgil and Malhotra 1998) argues that the caste system served to prevent the exploitation of natural resources where the "monopoly of lineages over particular resources in a given locality favoured the cultural evolution of social restraints on resource utilization, leading to their sustainable use" (Gadgil and Malhotra 1998:27). Similarly, Dwivedi writes that, "in a sense, the Hindu caste system can be seen as a progenitor of the concept of sustainable development" (1996:159). While the extent to which such a perspective is premised upon the belief that the caste system ought to be retained is unclear, many are critical for its implicit support for a system of social organisation principled on injustice (Baviskar 1999:27–28). As Sharma warns, "at certain times, environmental discourses, however well-intentioned, fall into the trap of valorisation and romanticisation of some dangerous forms of indigenism that aid obscurantist forces, albeit unintentionally" (2002).

Thus, while religious environmentalist discourse may have a very noble aim, it does run the risk of being taken up to support unintended

causes, or of becoming implicitly aligned with unwelcome political forces. Religious environmentalism shares with Hindu nationalism the desire to search ever further back in history for evidence that supports its contemporary agenda. Where the religious environmentalist is concerned to prove that environmental awareness is an authentic feature of the Hindu tradition throughout its history, from pre-Vedic times to the present,<sup>25</sup> the Hindu nationalist looks for evidence to support a view of Hinduism as the genuine and original Indian religiosity. Some scholars do not, however, make a clear distinction between those who employ a “Hindu civilisation” response to argue for conservationist ethics and those who support the Hindu Right. Baviskar, for instance, seems to implicitly align those who look to the Hindu tradition for ecological ethics with the Hindu Right. Thus, commentators such as Vandana Shiva (who famously argues that the Hindu tradition supports contemporary ecofeminist thinking) and Madhav Gadgil (with his ecological niche theory of caste) are not clearly differentiated from those who are associated with groups such as the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) and the *Vishva Hindu Parishad* (VHP). I agree that the recourse to a unified Hindu tradition that is superior to other Indian traditions, as well as western civilisation, is a potentially worrying force that has become dangerously politicised in recent decades. However, it is arguably possible to distinguish between those who look to the Hindu tradition as a means of encouraging ecological consciousness, or social justice, and those who have “hijacked” the environmental movement as a means of promoting a broader political agenda that otherwise has little to do with conservation.

Evidence for this view can be found in the recent interest that a number of high profile affiliates to the Hindu Right have shown for environmental issues. Sharma describes how the “Vrindavana Forest Revival Project” in Uttar Pradesh, initiated by some prominent

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<sup>25</sup> Chandrakanth and Romm, for instance, trace the Hindu reverence for trees back to the pre-Vedic depictions on seals uncovered from the Indus Valley Civilisation (1991).

environmental and religious organisations in 1991, shares the same language as the Hindu Right (2002). He writes that:

Vrindavana is seen as the birthplace of Krishna and after the Ram Janmabhumi liberation campaign and the destruction of the Babri Mosque, the “liberation of Krishna Janmabhumi” has become central to the agenda of Hindu conservatives. The language of this environmental project underlines, as causes of environmental problems of Vrindavana, the “abandonment of traditional Hindu values and technology,” “centuries of Muslim and British rule as detrimental to traditional Hindu culture and practices,” “forgetting the injunctions such as those found in *Manusmriti*,” thereby offering solutions on entirely new socio-political grounds, going beyond trees, shrub planting and sewage systems (2002).

However, the Vrindavana Forest Revival Project is first and foremost a conservation movement, although its language echoes broader nationalist sentiments within modern India. It provides an example of “strong” or “romantic” religious environmentalism whereby a revival of presumed Hindu values about the environment are considered to be necessary in order to halt further ecological destruction. The fact that these values intersect with those held by “Hindu conservatives” is certainly problematic, but should not necessarily imply an identification of this reforestation project with political and religious nationalism. The problem facing those that resort to a “Hindu civilisation” response, such as in the above passage, is that they are likely to be taken as showing support for the nationalist movement by critics of the Hindu Right.

Another example of the blurring of the boundaries between ecological and nationalist movements concerns the River Ganges. While attempts to encourage religious support for projects to clean up the Ganges have not been particularly successful, religious figures have been rather more prominent in voicing objections to the Tehri dam, which is being constructed on the River Bhagirathi, a tributary of the Ganges in the Himalayas.<sup>26</sup> The veteran Gandhian activist Sunderlal Bahuguna has largely championed this protest. Sharma writes that the movement which was set up to originally oppose the dam, back in

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<sup>26</sup> See Alley (2000) for a discussion of similar religious objections to the Ganges Canal in Haridwar in the early twentieth century.

1978, has routinely resorted to using Hindu myths to speak about the consequences of the dam and also actively seeks to gain the support of religious *sadhus* (2001; 2002). However, more recently an organised Hindu presence has become involved in the campaign through the VHP, and various rallies and marches have taken place to voice objection and garner support. Sharma quotes a *sadhvi*<sup>27</sup> attending a rally organised by the VHP in 2000: “the Tehri dam is being constructed to imprison the Ganga forever.<sup>28</sup> This is an organised conspiracy to demolish our religion and culture. The way we had to demolish the Babri mosque at our own risk, we have to get ready now for the demolition of the Tehri dam” (2001).

For the original anti-dam movement the recourse to religious ideas about the Ganges is one strategy for encouraging people to take to issue the seriously and has certainly raised the profile of the controversy surrounding the Tehri dam. By contrast, many of those who are stimulated by the religious rhetoric surrounding the dam seem more concerned with the Ganges as a symbol of Hindu culture and nation than with its ecological implications. In fact, Alley suggests that the Hindu Right hijacked the anti-Tehri dam campaign as a political tool during the 1998 election, but quickly lost interest once they secured victory (2002:223–26).<sup>29</sup> Thus, religious environmentalist discourse

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<sup>27</sup> A female mendicant.

<sup>28</sup> This echoes Kipling’s story “The Bridge-Builders,” set during the British colonial period, which relates “Mother Gunga’s” rage at being locked in by a newly constructed bridge and her appeal to the other Gods for help. They, on the other hand, have decided that it is time she backs down and takes “her appointed place in the new imperial geography” (Prakash 1999:168).

<sup>29</sup> Alley writes that interest in the dam issue arose “because of the perspective and concerns of a particular sadhu-saint, a religious political leader who plays a prominent role in state and national politics” (2002:223). Once that sadhu-saint, Swami Chinmayananda, however, was elected to office “the campaign against river pollution and the opposition to the Tehri dam fell away almost immediately” (2002:226). Alley concludes that although opposition to the dam does periodically enter his political ideology, on the whole, he has not translated his earlier concern into a sustained critique of government policy.

has different roles in the anti-Tehri dam campaign where diverse movements and ideologies have coalesced over the issue: from the Gandhian idealism of Sunderlal Bahuguna to the divisive nationalism of the VHP. Nevertheless, Baviskar suggests that the distance between these two may not be so great. Bahuguna, for instance, is “reported to have been one of the VHP delegates that recently met the Prime Minister pressing for the early construction of a temple at the site of the Babri mosque” (2001:6). Similarly, Sharma points out that Bahuguna has been observed “invoking popular stereotypes about the Muslim community” (2002:5). Thus, they query the extent to which this veteran of ecological activism is using instrumental devices to court the support of conservative Hinduism, or whether this more broadly reflects the spirit of the Hindu Right.

### *Conclusion*

To date, the response of the Hindu Right to environmental issues has remained sporadic and largely confined to the issue of the Tehri dam. Alley, for instance, suggests that it has been particularly difficult for the Hindu Right to maintain an interest in campaigns to clean up the Ganges because the Muslim community does not emerge as an obvious culprit to take the blame for its pollution (2000:370). However, while she argues that “the Muslim ‘other’ staged in struggles over sacred space fades away in discussions about Ganga’s sacrality” (2000:381), objection to the Tehri dam *does* employ anti-Muslim rhetoric. Although the depiction of the “Muslim other” as responsible for the damming of the Ganges at Tehri is not clearly or consistently articulated, we do find the linking of the Tehri issue to the Ram Janmabhumi movement (Alley 2002:224). This locates the concern of the Hindu Right for the damming of the Ganges within a broader political campaign against the Muslim community, which is considered to be intent upon destroying Hindu culture.

Whether or not the response of groups such as the VHP to the Tehri dam is sustainable, or likely to be repeated with respect to other ecological concerns, it is arguable that environmentalists in India ought to distance themselves from exclusively Hindu interpretations

of ecological issues. This way they can avoid being identified with the Hindu Right. The elevation of the Sanskrit tradition has been one of the criticisms widely levelled at commentators such as Shiva and Banwari, who invariably draw upon Brahmanical Hinduism to express their ecological ethics (Baviskar 1999). This ignores or downplays the diversity of religio-cultural traditions that exist in India from *adivasi* ("tribal"/indigenous) traditions to Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and Buddhism. In fact, although not without its problems, the literature surrounding sacred grove preservation is a welcome contribution to the over-emphasis upon the elite Sanskrit tradition that many feel has become synonymous with religious environmentalism in India (Baviskar 1999). Unless the practice of preserving sacred groves can be linked to events or personalities of classical Hinduism (as with the example of Krishna's forests in Vrindavana), or to the "Muslim enemy," the sacred grove is unlikely to appeal to the Hindu Right. While the literature on sacred groves does tend to classify sacred grove protection as part of the "Hindu" tradition, it is more correctly to be seen as part of a religio-cultural landscape that pre-dates and exists alongside the pan-Indian elite Brahmanical tradition. In fact, the process of "Sanskritisation" has had an impact upon the demise of the institution of the sacred grove, as regional deities become identified with the pan-Indian Gods and the groves are cleared to make way for temples. Nevertheless, much of the literature on sacred groves is limited by its failure to distinguish between the idea that aspects of Hinduism can be interpreted to support contemporary environmentalist thinking and the far stronger assertion that Hinduism is "environmentally friendly." As this paper has argued, the recognition of "bio-divinity" does not make one an environmentalist.

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## THE EARLY SPREAD OF VEDANTA SOCIETIES: AN EXAMPLE OF “IMPORTED LOCALISM”

GWILYM BECKERLEGGE

### *Summary*

Sri Ramakrishna, in whose name the Ramakrishna Math and Mission were created, and Swami Vivekananda, the disciple largely responsible for their organization, have been recognized as early examples of the “global gurus” who, over the last hundred years or so, have attracted both Hindus and those not born into Hinduism. This article will examine the establishment of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in the United States and London. As a consequence of its attachment to the ideal of an emergent universal religion, but one linked to the claim that Hinduism is the “mother of religions,” the movement has looked to the Hindu tradition for authoritative paradigms. This tendency has been matched by an expectation on the part of followers not born into Hinduism that the movement’s belief and ritual activity should reflect practice in India. It will be argued that this pattern cannot be explained adequately in terms of existing theoretical understandings of the interaction between globalization and localization. Instead, it will be argued that Vivekananda’s teaching led to the emergence of the related yet distinct phenomenon of “imported localism,” which has been at odds with the ideal of a universal religion.

### *The Ramakrishna Math and Mission: A “Global” Movement<sup>1</sup>*

It remains far from clear whether Sri Ramakrishna (c1836–1886 CE) commissioned Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902 CE) to institutionalize his legacy.<sup>2</sup> Ramakrishna, nevertheless, is honoured today in 147 Ramakrishna Math and Mission centres around the world. Although the majority are in India, the contemporary movement would

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a revised form of a paper given at the European Association for the Study of Religion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress, at the University of Bergen, May, 2003. I am grateful to Professor Gustavo Benavides for comments that greatly assisted its final revision.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 2 in Beckerlegge 2000 for scholarly debate about the extent of continuity between Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

commonly be thought of as “global.” In addition to signifying geographical extent, “global” may also suggest “. . . a different kind of consciousness which takes into account a new order of complexity wherein the particular and the universal, the local, regional, and international, interact in a quite new and previously unknown way” (King 1992:153). “Globalization,” whether understood as a process distinct from “modernization” or to a significant degree continuous with it (see Beckford 2003:104ff., 121f.), signals the advent of the profound and more comprehensive understanding of global unities outlined by King, with all this implies for human beings singly and collectively. We shall be concerned with this richer sense of “global” in exploring the extent to which the distinctive nature of the earliest Vedanta Societies/groups, which were created by Vivekananda in the United States and Europe between 1893–1897 and 1899–1900, can be understood adequately through reference to a relationship between processes of “globalization” and “localization.”

### *Intimations of a New World Order*

Vivekananda’s “mission” to the West required the dramatic re-ordering of time and space implied by incipient globalization, enabling him as a “transnational actor” to manage the propagation of his message (Cohen and Kennedy 2000:33). Lacking the concept of “globalization,” he alluded to increasingly complex inter-relationships between regions and political, economic, technological and cultural systems, when he wrote in 1899 of the “virtual presence of England” behind the armies and missionaries, “. . . whose war flag is the factory chimney, whose troops are the merchantmen, whose battlefields are the market-places of the world. . .” (Vivekananda 1989, 4:452). He recognised the unprecedented power that Britain exercised over the spread of ideas, and was quick to utilise the media (1989, 3:31f., 40; 6:365f.; 3:223). He relied heavily upon the railways. The developing international postal service made it possible for him to influence followers simultaneously in the United States, London and India, and to foster collaboration between them.

Addressing his “Sisters and Brothers of America” at the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, Vivekananda anticipated the emergence of a “universal religion,” identified with Advaita Vedanta, which would be in tune with the spirit of the increasingly globalized age in which he lived and put an end to intolerance. At this event, arguably for the first time, representatives of different religions began to make common cause in the light of their shared experience of global pressures exerted by scientific and other socio-economic forces. Vivekananda’s encounter with the sense of globality fostered at Chicago in turn may have increased the pressure on him to identify and clarify the place of Hinduism in the world (see Beckford 2003:115). After all, he had come to Chicago ostensibly to raise funds to alleviate conditions in India, and not initially to promote a universalist religious philosophy. In his first speech at the Parliament, Vivekananda spoke of religions as different “streams” or “paths” leading to the same goal (1989, 1:4). Individuals unable to appreciate that their various religions had arisen from the “... same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures” (1989, 1:18) were likened to frogs in their own wells (1989, 1:5). Yet, Vivekananda proclaimed in the same breath that Hinduism was the “mother of religions” (1989, 1:3).

Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita), one of Vivekananda’s closest western disciples, noted that he “... believed that the time had come when nations were to exchange their ideals, as they were already exchanging the commodities of the market” (Nivedita 1982:18). By 1894, although Vivekananda continued to elicit financial support for his project to alleviate material conditions in India, he had come to view this as part of an exchange for the spiritual wisdom he had imported from India (for example, Vivekananda 1989, 6:255). The creation of Vedanta Societies/centres was understood in these terms, as were the journeys to India by several of his closest western disciples. As the “first Hindu missionary” in the West (Brekke 2002:46), Vivekananda anticipated the gurus of global Hinduism of the 1960s and subsequently. In much the same way, several of Vivekananda’s closest followers prefigured the Americans and Europeans who made



“the journey to the East” (either literally or figuratively) during the latter half of the twentieth century.

*The Appeal of Vivekananda's Universal Religion*

The relative ease with which Vivekananda established Vedanta centres in New York (1894) and San Francisco (1900) and gathered a circle of supporters in London would initially appear to confirm Jackson's judgement that it was “... a story of the convergence of the right movement and the right time” (1994:1).

The nineteenth century saw assaults on regionally dominant expressions of Christianity in both the United States and England. Few of those attracted to Vivekananda's message in the United States were “... actively and meaningfully involved with main-stream Christianity. ... movements such as Theosophy and Christian Science were way stations between participation in the institutional Church and an identification with Vedanta,” as were New England Transcendentalism and New Thought (French 1974:98; cf. Jackson 1994:14; Veysey 1978:216). Some had entirely rejected Christianity and any other form of religion (for example, Gurudas 1919:163). Several of Vivekananda's American supporters were from the elite, and through education, wealth and opportunity were open to new and foreign ideas (Jackson 1994:29; Veysey 1978:212f.). Laura Glenn (Sister Devamata) joined the New York Vedanta Society, part of “a remarkable non-sectarian religious organization,” having met Vivekananda in 1899 (Devamata 1975:1, cf. 80). A Vassar graduate, she had studied in Europe and spent time in an Anglican convent but had also read the Upanishads and *Bhagavad Gita*, as well as Arnold's *Light of Asia* (His Eastern and Western Admirers 1983:122; Jackson 1994:94f.). Leon Landsberg (later Swami Kripananda) had travelled through Theosophy, finding “some truth” in all the religions he had studied “... but too much encrusted with superstition” (Anon. 1896:195). Ellen Waldo had similarly tested different teachers (Devamata 1932:243; Jackson 1994:91f.). Sister Christine (Christina Greenstidel), a former Christian Scientist, found in Vivekananda “... the touchstone for which we have been searching,” yet something “strangely familiar” for “I have known that *mind* be-

fore" (Sen 1930:420). For Josephine McLeod, Vivekananda was "... a Rock for us to stand *upon*. That was his function in my life, not worship, not glory, but a steadiness under one's feet for experiments! At last *I'm free*..." (Amiya 1950:28).<sup>3</sup>

Some held Vedanta to be compatible with existing religious commitments. Mary Phillips, a key worker in the New York Vedanta Society, asserted, "We are not giving up the religion of our forefathers nor the Christ of Nazareth. ... It is a delving to the roots of all religions, leaving us free to worship in whatever form we choose. ..." She spoke of there being many Christs who had all represented "fundamental principles of the philosophy of the Vedas" (quoted in French 1974:99). According to Josephine McLeod, however, something of a divide persisted between those who continued to believe in "the necessity of Christianity as a saving power" and those willing to relativize this conviction within the tenets of a universal religion. She observed that "Our Swami's great exposition of Vedanta Philosophy always favored rather than denied the mission of Christ, and left Christians better Christians, and this is what essentially appealed to Mr. Leggett [first President of the New York Vedanta Society], and in fact to all of us" (quoted in French 1974:98f.). Nevertheless, some felt uncomfortable with Vivekananda's criticisms of Christianity (Atulananda 1970:261f.). Miss Dutcher, Vivekananda's host at Thousand Island Park in 1895, has been remembered as "... a devout Methodist who had difficulty with some of Vivekananda's frontal assaults on her orthodoxy" (French 1974:65; cf. *His Eastern and Western Admirers* 1983:164f.).

In Britain, Vivekananda again drew his earliest disciples and supporters from different clusters of spiritual seekers, similarly disillusioned with the exclusivism of institutionalized Christianity. E.T. Sturdy, Henrietta Muller, and Captain and Mrs Sevier had direct acquaintance with India and Hindu religious thinking. Sturdy and Muller, who first invited Vivekananda to London, were former Theosophists.

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<sup>3</sup> Similar testimonies are to be found in the compilation of appreciations of Vivekananda, *His Eastern and Western Admirers* (1983:142, 154, 250, 418f.).

The Seviars, who returned to India to build up the Advaita Ashrama, declared that Vivekananda met a spiritual need they had been seeking to satisfy for years (Basu and Ghosh 1969:132). Other supporters, such as Eric Hammond and Isabel Margesson accommodated Vivekananda's message within existing personal philosophies already sympathetic to the notion of a universal truth manifested constantly in different religions (His Eastern and Western Admirers 1983:291f., 380). Eric Hammond and Henrietta Muller respectively found points in common with the Baha'i faith and Christian Theosophy (see Beckerlegge 2000:158–60). Margaret Noble (Nivedita 1982:20) referred to the "equal truth of all religions" as the "master-thought" to which Vivekananda constantly returned in his talks in London in 1895 and 1896. She declared, "The doctrine that while no one religion was true in the way commonly claimed, yet all were equally true in a very real way, was one that commanded the immediate assent of *some* of us" [emphasis added] (1982:21).

The Ramakrishna movement's approach to the issue of religious pluralism has continued to appeal strongly to its western devotees. For Christopher Isherwood (1948:1), Vedanta was nothing less than "a statement of the Philosophia Perennis." John Yale (1961:10, 12), later Swami Vidyatmananda, declared that the universalism of the Ramakrishna movement enabled him to be "... religious without being provincial" (cf. [Swami] Atulananda [born C.J. Heijblom] 1970:262). Pravrajika Vrajaprana's (2000) discussion of the recent progress of Vedanta in the United States refers uniformly to thinkers attracted to mysticism, notions of a perennial philosophy, and religious universalism.

The ideal of a universal religion has proved equally attractive to those training in Britain for acceptance into the Ramakrishna Math, disillusioned with the confines of Christianity and indeed any dogma maintaining that God "... manifested himself at only one time and place" (Carey 1987:136). In an interview in 2001, Swami Dayatmananda, Swami-in-charge of the Ramakrishna-Vedanta Centre at Bourne End, UK, maintained that Vivekananda had disseminated Vedanta, and not the "ethnic religion" of Hinduism, and that the Ra-

makrishna movement had taken up this task.<sup>4</sup> Swami Shivarupananda (born in Canada and then raised in England) had found that it was "... conceivable to think of the Divine as having form and being formless. ... I can't see God as a plc, limited to one particular cult, religion or religious expression." He added, "I can't be really a Hindu. I was moving into a universal religion."<sup>5</sup> Adopting a Vedantin stance, therefore, had not involved a desertion of Christianity, the religion of his birth, but was an evolutionary process of moving beyond an attachment to one form of the Divine. He believed Ramakrishna's ideas to be in tune with "... a world framework now marked by globalization and unification."

### *Local Difficulties*

Vivekananda's message found a small but ready audience in the West. The creation of stable organizations, however, was far from trouble-free. Vivekananda had to face defections and conflict between his followers. The New York centre survived this turmoil, although it was temporarily suspended in 1910, but the nascent London centre collapsed by 1899. The causes of this instability were varied.<sup>6</sup> Many who came to hear Vivekananda were never likely to be drawn to the Vedantin core of his message. Others brought a greater openness to the religious challenge of his ideas but very different understandings of how it related to their existing religious convictions. The temperaments and ambitions of individuals also came into play.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview material gathered by this writer in January, 2001, while making the video programme, "In the presence of gods and gurus," for the Open University course (AD317) *Religion Today: Tradition, Modernity and Change*. (Producer: Marinella Nicolson; Series Producer: Tessa Coombs: BBC, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Writing in 1919, Brahmachari Gurudas/Swami Atulananda (born C.J. Heijblom), in contrast, identified himself as a "Hindu," but as "a spiritual child of the Indian Rishis" rather than in a cultural sense (Gurudas 1919:161f.).

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed account of these developments, see French 1974, Jackson 1994, and Veysey 1978 on the United States, and Beckerlegge 2000: Part Three on London.

In New York, there were tensions between Swamis Kripananda and Abhayananda, the first two disciples initiated into *samnyasa* in the United States in 1895, and between these swamis and Vivekananda, and between them and other supporters. The most serious threat to the future of the New York society arose from a disagreement over its management between Swami Abhedananda and a cluster of Vivekananda's closest supporters and financial sponsors (Jackson 1994:54–57). Leggett subsequently resigned as the society's president and was replaced by one of Abhedananda's disciples, and the society continued under new rules that gave the swami-in-charge more control. Leggett, McLeod and Sara Bull then largely withdrew from the New York Vedanta scene, although did not sever their links with Vivekananda. Writing in 1900 to his close disciple, Christina Greenstidel, Vivekananda described the New York Vedanta Society as "... nearly broken to pieces" (quoted in Burke 1987:267).

Vivekananda spent less time in England than in the United States and confined his activity to London. As in the United States, fluid audiences fluctuated around a core of financial sponsors, such as Sturdy and Henrietta Muller, and a cluster of unswerving disciples. In 1899, Vivekananda found himself in conflict with some of these supporters and sponsors, which proved to be destructive for the immediate future of the London Vedanta centre. Unlike the United States, in England these critics turned their fire on Vivekananda's conduct as a *samnyasi* (see Beckerlegge 2000: Part Three).

Concerns of the day, common to many religious and social movements, impinged upon the reception of Vivekananda and his message. For example, social constraints predisposed many independently minded women, such as Margaret Noble, Henrietta Muller and Marie Louise (Swami Abhayananda), to explore their spirituality within alternative religious communities. Asceticism also exercised a powerful attraction for individuals within certain late nineteenth-century religious and social movements (cf. Veysey 1978:217f.). Both Vivekananda and popular Hinduism were judged against these and other external criteria by individuals who took up Vedanta from different starting points, for example, Henrietta Muller (Theosophy) and Mrs Ashton Jonson

who led the London Vedanta group after Vivekananda's departure (Christian Science), as well as by individuals who claimed to draw upon criteria internal to Hinduism when judging Vivekananda as a *samnyasi*, for example, Sturdy (cf. Burke 1985:339f.; and Sil 1997:92, 163 on Swami Kripananda).

The development of formal Vedantic organizations superimposed affiliations to groups under presidents and swamis-in-charge upon highly personal relationships with Vivekananda (cf. Jackson 1994:55f.). Having exercised some influence over the direction of Vivekananda's mission through their financial backing and social connections, patrons like Leggett and Muller perhaps came to realize that the organization, if not their individual relationships with Vivekananda, was heading in a direction that they could not follow as it became a highly distinctive, modern Hindu movement. This did not preclude enduring loyalty to Vivekananda, anticipating the importance of the intensely personal bond between guru and follower in the later American Vedanta movement (Veysey 1978:214). Josephine McLeod, for example, defended Vivekananda from the defectors' charges with the same vigour as Sister Nivedita. Even after the difficulties in New York, she remained close to Belur Math and the centre in Hollywood run by Swami Prabhavananda.

Every bit as striking as the dramatic and often public defections from the embryonic Vedanta centres in the West is the number of supporters who appeared to stop short of identifying themselves unreservedly with the core of Vivekananda's religious philosophy, or, according to Sil (1997:163), "resisted" discipleship. In New York, several of Vivekananda's intimate and long-standing supporters did not receive initiation of any kind, and there is no evidence that this was ever a thwarted personal ambition. Josephine McLeod consistently stated that she was Vivekananda's friend, not his disciple (Amiya 1950:28). Perhaps her declaration that the essential appeal of Vivekananda's philosophy was that it "... favored rather than denied the mission of Christ, and left Christians better Christians. ..." gives a clue as to the kinds of limits that some individuals set upon their personal involvement with Vedanta, and the different ways in which Vivekananda's devotees ac-

commodated his philosophy. Such personal limits may explain to some extent the painful defections of Henrietta Muller and Mrs Ashton Jonson, and their respective biting criticisms of Sister Nivedita's willingness to defend Kali-worship in Calcutta and "worship at Swami's feet" (see Beckerlegge 2000:196f.).

Henrietta Muller's withdrawal from the British Vedanta scene has been viewed within the Ramakrishna movement as the result of pique, but this ignores her consistently stated feminist and personal religious principles, which she characterised as "Christian Theosophy" (Beckerlegge 2000:180ff.). To say that she "returned" to Christianity on distancing herself from Vivekananda's circle begs the question of the extent to which she ever ceased to be, in her terms, a "Christian Theosophist." Even though Muller publicly rejected the Ramakrishna movement, her abiding conviction that Christianity revealed the common, cosmic truth behind all religions was broadly in line with the beliefs of many members of the early Vedanta groups in the United States and London, although not all of these would have identified with her Theosophical outlook. In spite of falling outside "main-stream Christianity," few would have felt compelled by their universalist beliefs to cut their ties to Christianity. Even Sister Nivedita, who only severed her formal connection with the Ramakrishna movement after Vivekananda's death because she refused to abide by its declared principle of political neutrality, stated in 1902 that "I have never broken with my position as a member of the Church of England nor is there any reason why I should do so," adding that she was not a Theosophist (Basu and Ghosh 1969:283; cf. an interview in 1900 reported in Burke 1987:289). Recalling the days she spent with Swami Ramakrishnananda at Madras between 1907 and 1909, Sister Devamata (1975:58) emphasised that "He was always careful to make plain that I had not changed my form of faith. Almost invariably he introduced me with the words: 'This is our Christian Sister.' He believed in the practice of religion, not in conversion."

It has been claimed that the influence of western ideas upon Vivekananda's beliefs constitute an example of "... elective affinities, rather than of imitation," where convergences are sought and exploited in or-

der to bolster existing principles or projects (Gupta 1974:34). Several of Vivekananda's closest and most important followers appear to have handled his philosophy in a similar way, incorporating modified elements of it within their existing worldviews (for example, denominational Christianity, Christian Science, Theosophy etc.) rather than necessarily accepting it in its entirety. These responses represent different reactions to one element within the far-reaching processes commonly held to characterise "globalization." This capacity evinced by Vivekananda's early followers, who in many cases were drawn from higher socio-economic groups, was undoubtedly facilitated by their educational attainments. The fact that more recent members of the Ramakrishna movement in the West have continued to respond to Vivekananda's challenge in this manner may similarly be a consequence of the way in which the movement has continued to appeal largely to older, relatively affluent and well educated followers (see French 1974:171f.; Carey 1987:136f.; Whitworth and Shiels 1982:167).

*Vivekananda's "Glocal" Religion and "Imported Localism"*

Beckford (2003:104, cf. 125ff.) has argued that it is "... unquestionably helpful to 'think with' the notion of globalisation, provided that the concept's limitations are kept in mind." For example, any reference to "globalization" begs the questions of its relationship to modernization and, as in the case of modernization, how far back the historical roots of this process should be traced. The periodization offered in response to these questions would appear to set clear limits on the categories of religious phenomena to which theories of globalization could be applied. As Beckford (2003:110) has pointed out, however, "... notions of globality have long been a feature of many faith traditions..." Many of the most widespread "missionary" religions, moreover, have a long history of transplanting their teachings into new cultural settings by translating them into new cultural forms.

The evolution of a universal religion not bound to one authoritative form of cultural expression could be regarded as a predictable manifestation of the process of globalization and its effects upon systems



of belief. As we have seen, this view has been adopted within the Ramakrishna movement. Consequently, it might be assumed that the growth during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently of a global religious network like the Ramakrishna movement would particularly lend itself to explanation in terms of pressures generated by globalization, stimulating a reassertion of the local (“localization”), whether in terms of social/national identity, general cultural preference or in matters of religious belief and practice.<sup>7</sup>

The ideal of a universal religion promoted by Vivekananda not only differed from the ideals and goals that provided the dynamism behind the expansion of longer established “missionary” religions but also, as we shall see, marked a break with earlier expressions of Hinduism. For these reasons, closer examination of the growth of the Ramakrishna movement in the United States and London will test the usefulness of insights and explanatory concepts generated by the critical debate surrounding “globalization,” suggesting a need to modify the way in which the relationship between “globalization” and “localization” has been commonly delineated.

The claim that Swami Vivekananda offered his followers a “universal religion” did not stem simply from the aspiration, found in certain earlier religions, that there should be no cultural or social bar to their worldwide expansion. Vivekananda’s “universal religion” would “. . . have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God it will preach . . ., which will not be Brahmanic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development . . ., which will recognise divinity in every man and woman. . .” (Vivekananda 1989, 1:19). Anticipating a religion that would not be linked to “place or time,” Vivekananda was convinced that diversity of belief and practice would continue but would come to be understood as the consequence of temperamental, cultural and historical factors, each being “. . . true as far as it goes” (1989, 2:383).

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<sup>7</sup> Compare, for example, Schaefer’s (2002) study of Pentecostalism.

Vivekananda's advocacy of the timeliness of deriving principles of a universal religion from Advaita Vedanta has undoubtedly contributed to "... a distinctive approach to religious plurality [that] has been associated with Hinduism..." since 1893 (Sharma 1979:59). Hacker has asserted, however, that Vivekananda and other Neo-Hindu thinkers merely exploited the same "inclusivism" found within traditional Hinduism and that this was essentially different from tolerance (see Halbfass 1995:245).<sup>8</sup> Throughout its history, Hinduism has indeed shown a capacity to assimilate regional traditions. It has permitted the maintenance of fuzzy boundaries both between its different schools of thought and, at a popular level, between it and other religions such as Sikhism and even Islam, absorbing "... aspects of other religions without feeling the need to acknowledge their existence" (Smith 2003:34; cf. Copley 1997:57). Ramakrishna, Vivekananda's own guru, regularly affirmed the validity of different spiritual paths. It is important, however, to distinguish between this pattern and the new undertaking by those nineteenth-century, Hindu intellectuals who, being more fully exposed to global religious pluralism, felt drawn into a dialogue with representatives of European religious thinking (Copley 1997:57; cf. Young 1981:13). Vivekananda, in an unprecedented manner, created a modern organization that utilised certain resources from the Hindu tradition to invite both Hindus and those not born into Hinduism to participate in what he presented to them as a universal religion. The question of the extent to which his universal religion was other than a reinterpretation of Hinduism is one to which we shall return in the latter part of this article.

Vivekananda's redefinition of the Indian system of Vedanta in terms of more general emphases that would strike chords across cultural and religious boundaries may legitimately be said to represent a degree of strategic, "glocal" tweaking of received Hindu tradition (from "globalization," the provision within global marketing for the marketing of difference according to local taste; see Robertson 1992:173f.). This

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<sup>8</sup> Hacker's theory of "inclusivism" and its relationship to Hacker's Christian position are discussed in Halbfass 1995:10ff., 244ff.

ploy may be compared with those acknowledged within the doctrinal frameworks of religious traditions with histories of missionary activity and expansion, although clearly this was a novel departure within the Hindu tradition.

When expounding his ideal of a universal religion, Vivekananda (1989, 1:17) frequently pointed to the acceptance of diversity within Hinduism, to its recognition that "... all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite..." Sceptical of the rationality of belief in a personal God, he asserted the superiority of belief in an impersonal reality on the grounds that it alone can be infinite and can include the sum of personal understandings. The Impersonal, therefore, is "our highest generalisation" (1989, 2:334). He presented his argument that one must proceed from the particular to the highest possible level of generalization and explain the particular in terms of the general as consistent with modern science and in accord with rationality (1989, 2:329, cf. 334–37). Sharma (1978:135) has noted that Advaitins in the tradition of Shankara had long recognised that to speak of the Ultimate as "formless" is a "mere formulation" of what can only be experienced. Advaita, according to Sharma, "... shares Hindu plurality, it does not supervise it" (1978:135). Vivekananda did not hesitate to affirm the superiority of the monistic position over the personalist stance while maintaining that the personalist stance is not lost or destroyed but is included within and explained by the higher level of generalization offered by monism. It was to Vedanta that Vivekananda referred, and not the religion denoted by the term "Hinduism."

Vedanta represented for Vivekananda the highest insight of Hinduism and the clearest anticipation to date of the universal religion. In nineteenth-century Bengal, Vedanta was widely held to be synonymous with Advaita, and, by 1896, Vivekananda had come to identify "Vedantist" with "Hindu." The elasticity in the usage of "Vedanta," "Advaita," and "Hindu" served Vivekananda's purpose when he turned to a non-dualist form of Vedanta as the "highest generalisation" of religious metaphysics and ethics. When speaking of Advaita/Vedanta in this vein, Vivekananda was prepared to reduce the complexities of this

long-established Hindu philosophical tradition to a very generalized level of meaning. Its secret was, “Believe in yourself first, and then believe in anything else” (Vivekananda 1989, 3:426). In a letter to Sturdy, he warned against inflicting “jaw-breaking Sanskrit terms and technicalities” upon western readers (1989, 7:490; cf. Jackson 1994:64). Vivekananda was similarly responsible for shaping a representation of Ramakrishna for western consumption, which detached Ramakrishna from his moorings in popular religion in Bengal, and instead highlighted more universal themes in Ramakrishna’s teaching within the framework of Vivekananda’s version of Advaita.

Vivekananda did not lace his own teaching with justifications taken from Ramakrishna’s life and discourses, repeatedly reminding his brother-disciples that they should preach the principle, not the person (for example, 1989, 5:227; 6:274, 310). The emergent “universal religion” that Vivekananda presented to his western audiences, nevertheless, was one that appealed to Hindu textual authorities (particularly the *Bhagavad Gita* and Upanishads) and Hindu exemplars (including Chaitanya and Krishna), as well as to reason and current notions of evolution and social progress. But, as the proponent of a universal religion that claimed to be the “sum total” of beliefs and not simply a brand of Hinduism, Vivekananda opened up the possibility that his hearers, already sympathetic to the universalism of his message, might test both his teaching and conduct within the terms of their existing personal philosophies. Consequently, Vivekananda’s mission provoked markedly different “localized” responses. This was the result in part of the bringing together of individuals and groups with very varied expectations, and in part of the difficulties in promoting a religion centred upon the universal and “formless” transcending cultural particularities.

Vivekananda’s earliest followers on both sides of the Atlantic can be differentiated according to the extent to which they shared not merely a commitment to promoting a universal religion but also identified with their teacher’s Hindu background and plans for India. His most enduring followers were those who accepted initiation as his disciples, in some cases adopting Hindu-inspired religious names/titles (for example, Laura Glenn [Sister Devamata], Ellen Waldo [Haridasi], Christina

Greenstidel [Sister Christine], Margaret Noble [Sister Nivedita], probably the Seviers), those who spent extended periods with him in India (several of the above and other American followers such as Josephine McLeod and Sara Bull), and those who resettled in India (the Seviers, Sister Nivedita). It is evident, nevertheless, that even these enthusiasts valued and responded to this connection to India and things Hindu in different ways. Ellen Waldo [Haridasi] declared that, in spite of her close association with Vivekananda, "... the idea of renunciation never once occurred to me. Nor did I ever think seriously of following him to India" (Devamata 1932:242). On the other hand, some followers, notably Margaret Noble, once in India were complicit in Vivekananda's intention of "Hinduizing" or "Indianizing" their outlook (His Eastern and Western Disciples 1989, 2:325, 337). Then there were close followers who appear not to have sought or to have resisted initiation, while one at least was refused *brahmacharya* (Henrietta Muller). A small minority claimed sufficient familiarity with Hindu tradition to criticise Vivekananda's conduct as a Hindu *samnyasi* against criteria they judged to be appropriate to this role. Finally, there were those who distanced themselves from Vivekananda and his movement.

Not all the disciples who identified with the Indian dimension of Vivekananda's work remained committed to him. Both Henrietta Muller and Sturdy had travelled in India prior to meeting Vivekananda. By the time Muller joined Vivekananda and other western disciples in India in 1897/98, however, Vivekananda had rejected her plea to take up the discipline of *brahmacharya*, and her relations with the group as a whole had soured to the extent that she travelled separately. She was on the brink of announcing the end of her association with the Ramakrishna movement. Her direct experience of India had made her highly critical of popular Hindu practice, and she gave the need for reform as the public reason for her separation from Vivekananda and "return" to Christianity. Having married just prior to his association with Vivekananda, Sturdy had bound himself to the life of the householder, bitterly observing, "Many things have come too late for me in this incarnation" (quoted in Burke 1985:217).

The reason for the seeming need to foster an attachment to India and forms of Hindu religious practice in the pursuit of a universal religion is not immediately clear. Something of the challenge facing Vivekananda in the West as the organizer of a religious movement, however, is illustrated by a discussion with Sturdy in which, contrary to his customary stance, Vivekananda considered devising a collective ritual of worship in order to meet the expectations of potential followers. On this occasion, it was Vivekananda who had to be dissuaded from this idea (Vivekananda 1989, 8:356f.; cf. Burke 1985:254ff., 306f.). As Vivekananda's not altogether successful attempt at preventing the worship of Ramakrishna at Advaita Ashrama (dedicated to non-dualist ideals) illustrates, members of both the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India and the West have shown a consistent desire to perform rituals of worship derived from established Hindu models, including chanting of texts and the distribution of *prasada* (Beckerlegge 2000:123f.; cf. Cooke 1966:23; Jackson, 1994:103f.; Miller and Wertz 1976:136; Whitworth and Shiels 1982:165). The association of the movement's origins with Bengal inevitably has permeated to some extent the cultic activities of its Indian centres, but not to the exclusion of the celebration of festivals and great personalities associated with other regions of India and marking certain major festivals of other religions. For those not born into Hinduism, the compelling attraction of a previously unfamiliar form of ritual may stem not so much from its character as a *Hindu* practice but as a means through which to pass through the liminal state of adopting a new world-view. The very unfamiliarity of the ritual may give rise to a state of heightened self-consciousness, in contrast to the routine performance of more familiar rituals, which is no less beneficial to those taking up Vedanta. Similar points might be made about other aspects of the external organization and practice of Vedanta societies in the West.

Vivekananda had to manage his western audiences' expectations. He was determined not to delegate responsibility for the work in India to his western disciples, but he did speak of his intention of initiating some from their number to place in authority over his

supporters in the West. Some of these followers, however, were disappointed on finding Vivekananda's place filled by Kripananda (Burke 1985:466f.). In London, Abhedananda had more problems than Vivekananda in maintaining large audiences. Yet, Abhedananda's removal to New York proved to be a blow to the English wing of the movement whose members were thrown upon their own resources, no longer having a direct disciple of Ramakrishna as a spiritual leader. Sympathisers in both the United States and London looked to India and swamis who were the direct disciples of Ramakrishna, and pre-eminently Vivekananda, as authority-figures. To this day, the movement continues to place Indian *samnyasis*, trained at Belur Math, in charge of its centres.

During the early phase of the movement's development in both the United States and England, we have seen that a significant number of followers *were* anxious to maintain the distinction between Hinduism and the universal religion dubbed "Vedanta." On finding either that it was not possible to do so or that the movement's direction was blurring this distinction, some distanced themselves from the movement. Perhaps for them, Vedanta was never more than a useful portmanteau in which to place universalistic religious sympathies that previously lacked a name. Even more recently, individuals training in Britain for admission to the Ramakrishna Math have been keenly aware of a tension between "the Mission's ideal of religious harmony and universalism" and its "cultural tradition" (Carey 1987:141). Like some of Vivekananda's earliest American followers, these more recent trainees have spoken of their deep attachment to Christian values and western monasticism. Having entered the Mission to expand their vision, they were troubled by their encounter with "the Hindu cult trappings of the Order" or "the devotional aspects of Hinduism" (Carey, 1987: 142f.). Commenting on the American movement, Jackson (1994:74) concludes that "... thousands of Americans have joined the Vedanta societies since 1893, in the process abandoning Christianity for a modern form of Hinduism. Despite all protestations, the swamis appear

to work as missionaries of Hinduism in the West.”<sup>9</sup> McDermott (Unpublished: 2–4) has described tensions resulting from the “new Indi-ization” of the Vedanta movement in America, which followed the increased migration of Indian families to America after 1965. She has referred to the lid being taken off the “bubbling cauldron of discontent” by a fierce debate between those “. . . calling for a revitalization of Swami Vivekananda’s original vision for a truly Western Vedanta,” and those who have pressed for Hindu food, music and ritual and who have been more accustomed to the style of relationship between devotees and swamis found in India.

On the other hand, although seemingly offered the universal religion of Vedanta as distinct from Hinduism, many of Vivekananda’s earliest and most devoted western disciples and their successors either have chosen to ignore this distinction, or finding it meaningless in practice have been untroubled by this. This tendency might be termed “imported localism”; i.e. a self-imposed “Hinduizing” distinct from “localization,” the reassertion of immediately local markers of identity (whether, for example, Christian, Christian Scientist or Theosophical), Vivekananda’s “glocal” version of Vedanta as the universal religion, and his “Indianizing” of Nivedita in India. This relocation of selective elements of Hindu religion and Indian culture was largely mediated by Vivekananda in his role as transnational actor. It has given rise to expressions of Hinduism that are different from both earlier forms of popular religious activity in India and Vivekananda’s “glocal” philosophy of Vedanta. The development in the West of a cult centred upon Ramakrishna and the use of Hindu ritual forms and artefacts, which were not central to Vivekananda’s philosophy, and the maintenance of close links with the movement’s Indian centres are examples of the persistence of this “imported localism.” While the continued, exclusive appointment of Indian *sannyasis* as leaders of the movement’s centres may reflect an engrained sense of “cultural tradition,” it also matches the expectations of a significant number of western followers.

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<sup>9</sup> Contact with Vedanta has also led some to view Christianity in a new and positive light. See Jackson 1994:101; Gurudas 1919:163, 183ff.



*Conclusion*

The introduction of the term “imported localism” to describe the “Hinduization” so eagerly sought or accepted by many of the most prominent of Vivekananda’s early followers in the United States and London inevitably begs the question of what Vivekananda himself intended, and more specifically whether his promotion of the universal religion of Vedanta was ever more than a device to be deployed against the West as part of a Hindu apologetic, while he acted to encourage “imported localism.”<sup>10</sup> His western devotees repeat his assertion that he had come to make them better Christians, not Hindus (for example, Atulananda 1970:259, 264; cf. Vivekananda 1989, 3:501; Swami Ashokananda, quoted in McDermott, Unpublished: 7). Whatever Vivekananda’s motives might have been, his affirmation that diversity of religious belief and practice was nothing more than a consequence of temperamental, cultural and historical factors, and thus only “. . . true as far as it goes” (1989, 3:383), should have provided no inducement to take up previously unfamiliar and culturally alien forms of religious practice in pursuit of the universal religion.

Forsthoefel (2002:114) has argued that Shankara’s system of Advaita combined “. . . a theoretical universalism and a fundamental internalism, but heavy doses of externalism as well.” He suggests that a “radical form of Advaita,” which relies more consistently upon an internalist epistemology based on reason and religious experience, “. . . may be properly universalist.” He finds this in the thinking of Ramana Maharshi in a form of Vedanta that “. . . transcends . . . the social and cultural settings of South Asia,” while discerning a similar universalism in Vivekananda’s philosophy (Forsthoefel 2002:154f.). Our study of the early phase of the Vedanta movement in the West suggests the need to qualify Forsthoefel’s judgement on the extent to

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<sup>10</sup> For fuller discussion of this, see Beckerlegge (forthcoming). See also Basu 2002:67ff., who argues, citing Nivedita, that Vivekananda’s “universalisation of Hinduism,” based on “the Advaita principles of Universalism,” formed part of his nationalist endeavours.

which Vivekananda's system reduced dependence upon an externalist epistemology shaped by Hindu forms of knowledge and practice, whether related to texts, forms of worship or the disciplines of spiritual training. Vivekananda's championing of India and its "mother of religions," while proposing that Vedanta could provide the foundations of a universal religion in the West, limited the extent to which he was able to rely more exclusively upon the kind of internalist epistemology that Forsthoefel (2002:114) argues would be more in harmony with the "theoretical universalism" of early Advaita. A legacy of these two aspects of Vivekananda's role as a transnational actor is arguably the tension that continues to the present-day between the Ramakrishna movement's ideal of religious universalism and its "cultural tradition" (Carey 1987:141).

As long as the search for a universal religion is tinged by some degree of conscious rejection of the "local" religion, it is likely that individuals will respond warmly to the form of the system that appears to hold out the possibility of realising a more comprehensive vision, even when its mediator appears not to require this of them. The adoption of previously unfamiliar rituals, this article has suggested, might assist in strengthening the individual's identification with a new world-view as well as providing a measure of confirmation of its "universalism." Consequently, "imported localism" is likely to continue to be a characteristic of what aspires to be a global, universal religion. This may not be an exclusive characteristic of enterprises centred upon the ideal of a universal religion, although it is likely to be more pronounced in such instances because of their inherent claims. Distinguishing between "glocalization," "localization" in its broader sense, and "imported localism," therefore, may assist in the analysis of the transplantation of religions more generally.

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# RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT: C.P. TIELE'S PARADIGM OF SCIENCE OF RELIGION<sup>1</sup>

ARIE L. MOLENDIJK

## *Summary*

This essay explores C.P. Tiele's fundamental notion of religious development and, in a certain respect, it complements my earlier paper on his concept of religion, which he ultimately locates "in the innermost depths of our souls" (*Numen* 46 [1999]). The present article argues that the mere possibility of an interrelated, comparative study of religions (in the plural) is founded on the idea of a developmental history of religion (in the singular). To Tiele, this history testifies to the fact that the changing and transient forms of religion are ultimately inadequate expressions of the infinite in us. Thus, his "science" ties in perfectly with his liberal Protestantism. I start with some remarks on the use of the concept of religious development in the nineteenth century, then I outline Tiele's basic assumptions (with special reference to his 1874 article on the laws of development), and, finally, I scrutinize the first series of the Gifford Lectures (1896–1898), which epitomize his later views on religious development. It is shown that developmental thinking in early Dutch science of religion did not originate primarily in Darwinian thought but in German idealism. Moreover, one has to keep in mind that Tiele's developmental views met severe criticism among his successors. For instance, Gerardus van der Leeuw rejected the whole idea of religious progress because it did not comply with the unique and absolute character of religious experience. Thus, contrary to Eric Sharpe's suggestion, evolutionism was not dominant in Dutch religious studies throughout the period between the wars.

Briefly, the development of religion is the necessary consummation of all human development, and is at once demanded and promoted by it.

(C.P. Tiele)

The notion of "development" pervaded the nineteenth-century study of religion. Max Müller lectured extensively on the "origin and growth of

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank my colleagues Jan N. Bremmer, Hetty Zock, and the anonymous reviewer of *Numen* for their comments on earlier versions of this article.

religion,”<sup>2</sup> Edward B. Tylor undertook “researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art, and custom,” as the subtitle of *Primitive Culture* states,<sup>3</sup> and Cornelis Petrus Tiele treated the “hypothesis of development” in some detail. This paper will focus on Tiele and show how the idea of development functioned in his work, actually forming the foundation of his science of religion. No doubt other students of religion at the time were also deeply steeped in thinking in terms of religious development, but Tiele made an enormous effort to clarify the importance of the “hypothesis of development” for the study of religion. Before turning to Tiele, however, I will make some general remarks on the use of the concept of religious development in the nineteenth century (I). Secondly, I will outline Tiele’s basic assumptions, paying special attention to his, at that time, famous article of 1874 on the laws of development (II). Thirdly, I will scrutinize the first series of the Gifford Lectures, which epitomize his later views on religious development (III), and finally I will draw some conclusions (IV).<sup>4</sup>

### *I. Some Remarks on “Development” in Nineteenth-Century Thought*

Besides Tiele, the anthropologist Edward B. Tylor (1832–1917) was an extremely influential representative of evolutionist thinking in the nineteenth century. His line of research has been described as follows: “Tylor’s central anthropological problem, in its simplest terms, was to ‘fill the gap between Brixham Cave and European Civilization without introducing the hand of God’ — that is, to show that human culture was, or might have been, the product of a natural evolutionary

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<sup>2</sup> F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin and the Growth of Religion. As Illustrated by the Religions of India*, London 1878.

<sup>3</sup> E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* (1871), 2 vols., 3rd ed., London 1891.

<sup>4</sup> For an analysis of the second series of the Gifford Lectures, cf. Arie L. Molendijk, “Tiele on Religion,” *Numen* 46 (1999), 237–268.



development.”<sup>5</sup> The discovery of Brixham Cave had established the great antiquity of man and demonstrated that the biblical chronology was untenable. For Tylor, this meant that the investigation of human history had to be conducted along the lines of the “sciences of inorganic nature”: “[O]ur thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants and animals.”<sup>6</sup> Part of the debate concerned the question of what kind of “laws” were involved in the process of the development of human culture. Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900)<sup>7</sup> also contributed to this enterprise. In a sentence which shows an almost boyish excitement in digging for the treasures of ancient times, Müller warned that his position was different from that of G.W.F. Hegel or Auguste Comte: “There is to my mind no subject more absorbing than the tracing [of] the origin and first growth of human thought; — not theoretically, or in accordance with the Hegelian laws of thought, or the Comtian epochs; but historically, and like an Indian trapper, spying for every footprint, every layer, every broken blade that might tell and testify of [sic!] the former presence of man in his early wanderings and searchings after light and truth.”<sup>8</sup>

This last formulation betrays the practical dimension of much evolutionary thought. Both Tiele and Müller hoped that the newly established science of religion would help to bring about a purer and more advanced form of religion. This ideal is often criticized by modern scholars, who want the science of religion to be a “fully secular, fully

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<sup>5</sup> George W. Stocking, “On the Limits of ‘Presentism’ and ‘Historicism’ in the Historiography of the Behavioral Sciences” (1965), repr. in his *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, New York and London 1968, 1–12, esp. p. 11; cf. also his *Victorian Anthropology*, New York etc. 1987, 69–74.

<sup>6</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Lourens P. van den Bosch, *Friedrich Max Müller: A Life Devoted to the Humanities*, Leiden 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. I: *Essays on the Science of Religion*, 2nd ed., London 1868, ix.

neutral discipline.”<sup>9</sup> However, it should be borne in mind that most research at the time — also by those who were critical of Christianity — was not disinterested. Tylor, for one, claimed that ethnography was, in the end, “a reformer’s science” which contributed to the “advancement of civilization.” It may be painful “to expose the remains of crude old culture which have passed into harmful superstition, and to mark these out for destruction.” Yet this work had to be done “for the good of mankind.”<sup>10</sup> The doctrine of development involved a new, progressive view of history, which differed fundamentally, for instance, from that of David Hume. The author of *The Natural History of Religion* (1757) thought that the chief use of history was to discover the “constant and universal principles of human nature”: “Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular.”<sup>11</sup> The notion of progressive development (including new stages) has its roots in German Idealism — Nietzsche even declared it to be a typical German invention.<sup>12</sup> According to this line of thought, the development of the human species was gradually disconnected from that of nature.<sup>13</sup> In Britain, however, the idea that

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<sup>9</sup> Jan G. Platvoet, “Hawk Says/Osansa se: *Ade a Onyame aye nhina ye*. An Observer’s View of the Development of the Study of Religion in South Africa” (paper presented at the ASRSA Congress, Swaziland, 28–30 June 1993), 13f.; quoted in Abdulkader I. Tayob, “Modern South Africa and the Science of Religion: Productive and Inhibitive Models for the Study of Religions,” in *Modern Societies and the Science of Religions*, ed. Gerard A. Wieggers and Jan G. Platvoet, Leiden etc. 2002, 302–28, at p. 322.

<sup>10</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, 453 (1st ed., p. 410).

<sup>11</sup> David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1777), ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed. revised by P.H. Nidditch, Oxford etc. 1975, VII.i.65 (p. 83).

<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Aph. 357 (Schlechta ed., vol. II, 226).

<sup>13</sup> K. Weyland, “Entwicklung I,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter, vol. II, Darmstadt 1972, cols. 550–57. Here is not the place to sketch the history of the idea of development in European intellectual history, which would have to include French scholars as well. For the emancipation of the scholarly study

human history is part and parcel of natural history was not so readily given up, as is evident from the work of men like Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin and Tylor. Despite these differences, in all cases scholars held the notion that species or stages of society develop out of earlier forms.

The variety of concepts and theories of development in the nineteenth century was immense and I will not attempt to present an overview, let alone give a synthesis. However, one term must be addressed and that is "evolutionism." In this context it does not refer to Darwin and his followers, but to a theory of culture, which claims a unilinear, universal development from a "barbaric," or "savage," stage, to a "civilized" form of human coexistence. In more developed civilizations, "survivals"<sup>14</sup> from older stages may exist, but principally the course of history is progressive. One of the most famous schemes of evolution is given by Lewis Henry Morgan, who proposed the three stages of "savagery," "barbarism," and "civilisation" in his classic study *Ancient Society* (1877).<sup>15</sup> Evolutionism was a social theory with wide ramifications, and, according to one's point of view and interests, various representatives can be distinguished. In his stimulating book on the Victorian era, J.W. Burrow focuses on Sir Henry Main, Herbert Spencer and Tylor, and also devotes some attention to theo-

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of history from the philosophy of history in the nineteenth century, see Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophy in Germany, 1831–1993*, Cambridge 1984, 33–65.

<sup>14</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 16 (1st ed., p. 15); cf. Kippenberg, "Survivals. Conceiving of Religious History in an Age of Development," in *Religion in the Making: The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion*, ed. Arie L. Molendijk and Peter Pels, Leiden 1998, 297–312.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gerhard Schlatter, "Evolutionismus," in *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe*, ed. Hubert Cancik *et al.*, vol. II, Stuttgart, etc. 1990, 385–93; W. Rudolph, "Evolutionismus, kultureller," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter, vol. II, Darmstadt 1972, cols. 835–36; James Waller and Mary Edwardsen, "Evolutionism," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. V, New York 1986, 214–18.

rists such as J.F. McLennan and Sir John Lubbock.<sup>16</sup> In so doing, he does not deny the importance of continental scholars, such as Wilhelm Wundt, A. Bastian and A. Waitz. On the contrary, Burrow sees evolutionary theory in Victorian England as the outcome of a “tension between English positivistic attitudes to science on the one hand and, on the other, a more profound reading of history, coming to a large extent from German romanticism, which made the older form of positivist social theory . . . seem inadequate.”<sup>17</sup> Evolutionism was dominant in early ethnology or, as it is now called, cultural anthropology. Tylor and James George Frazer are often mentioned as its main late nineteenth-century representatives. Developmental schemata such as “magic, religion, science” informed much research. Functionalistic anthropology gradually replaced the old evolutionism, stressing the fact that “magic,” “religion,” and “science” could exist at the same time in one and the same culture, which ultimately had to be understood in its own context.<sup>18</sup>

Evolutionist schemes did not necessarily imply that religion was a superseded stage in human development, but could also be applied within the field of religion, to demonstrate, for instance, that “primitive” forms of religion, such as animism and fetishism, developed through various sorts of polytheism to the highest stage of monotheism. This view was not uncontested. Tylor’s pupil Andrew Lang (1844–1912) defended the thesis that a kind of theistic pre-animism was the earliest stage of religious development.<sup>19</sup> In an undated letter, Lang wrote: “To put it shortly . . . most of the very backward races

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<sup>16</sup> J.W. Burrow, *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory*, Cambridge 1966, xiii–xiv; cf. Peter J. Bowler, *Theories of Human Evolution: A Century of Debate, 1844–1944*, Oxford 1986.

<sup>17</sup> Burrow, *Evolution*, xv. Behind German romanticism lurks German idealism, which helped to establish a whole new paradigm of thinking in terms of historical development.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, esp. 314–29.

<sup>19</sup> On pre-animism and its proponent R.R. Marett, see Hans G. Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age*, Princeton and Oxford 2002, 125–26. According to Marett, Tylor’s concept of animism (“belief in spiritual beings”) was

have a very much better God than many races a good deal higher in civilisation.”<sup>20</sup> This view — known by its German name *Urmonotheismus* — found its most adamant defender in the person of the devout Catholic scholar Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954).<sup>21</sup> On the basis of this assumption, which accords better with the biblical narratives, a kind of “degeneration” must have taken place in a later phase of religious history. Most scholars at the time, however, did not accept the “degeneration hypothesis,” but had a more or less evolutionist view of religious history.<sup>22</sup>

By 1900, historians had pointed to “the ubiquity of evolution” in religious studies.<sup>23</sup> More often than not this was explained by reference to the influence of Charles Darwin. In 1909, Jane Harrison (1850–1929), the British specialist on ancient Greek religion, talked about “the creation by Darwinism of the scientific study of religions.”<sup>24</sup>

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too intellectual to capture the human sense of awe and power, which lies at the origin of religion.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Eric Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History*, 2nd ed., London 1986, 63.

<sup>21</sup> The Dutch ethnologist J.J. Fahrenfort wrote his dissertation about this subject and became involved in a polemic with Schmidt; cf. Fahrenfort, *Het hoogste wezen der primitieven: Studie over het “oermonotheïsme” bij enkele der laagste volken*, Groningen and Den Haag 1927; *Wie der Urmonotheismus am Leben erhalten wird*, Groningen and Den Haag 1930; on the controversy with Schmidt see A.J.F. Köbben, “J.J. Fahrenfort (1885–1975). Schoolmaster and Scholar,” in *Tales from Academia: History of Anthropology in the Netherlands*, ed. Han Vermeulen and Jean Kommers, 2 vols., Saarbrücken 2002, I, 245–65.

<sup>22</sup> For Tiele's rejection of the “degeneration hypothesis,” see Tiele, *De plaats van de godsdiensten der natuurvölker in de godsdienstgeschiedenis* (Inaugural address 1873), Amsterdam 1873, 8–11.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Ackerman, “J.G. Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists and the ‘Scientific’ Study of Religion,” in *Religion in the Making*, ed. Molendijk and Pels, 129–58, at p. 137; cf. Ackerman, *J.G. Frazer: His Life and Work*, Cambridge 1987.

<sup>24</sup> Jane Harrison, “The Influence of Darwinism on the Study of Religion,” in *Darwin and Modern Science*, ed. A.C. Seward, Cambridge 1909, 494–511, at p. 494 (quoted by Ackerman, “Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists,” 137); cf. Mary Beard, *The Invention of Jane Harrison*, Cambridge, MA 2000; Annabel Robinson, *The Life and Work of Jane Ellen Harrison*, Oxford 2002.

The famous anthropologist R.R. Marett (1866–1943) spoke in the same vein as Jane Harrison<sup>25</sup> and, indeed, the notion of religious development was apparently the basis of much comparative research. In 1912, the British scholar Joseph Estlin Carpenter (1844–1927), lecturer on Comparative Religion at Manchester College (Oxford), wrote that the whole study of the history of religion was “firmly established” on the basis of the “great idea” of evolution.<sup>26</sup> How influential this “great idea” actually was within religious studies would be a fine topic for further research. One should, however, avoid referring simply to Darwin in this context, as recent scholarship has shown that Darwinism and the evolutionary theory of culture are clearly to be distinguished from each other.<sup>27</sup>

In his still much used history of comparative religion, Eric Sharpe does not entirely avoid this kind of misrepresentation, as he claims that the establishment of the field is due to the evolutionary method. He writes the following:

Before 1859 the student of the religions of the world, although he might have ample motive for his study, and more than enough material on which to base his researches, had no self-evident method for dealing with the material; after 1869, thanks to developments of the intervening decade, he had the evolutionary method.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, 48.

<sup>26</sup> J. Estlin Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, London 1912, 33.

<sup>27</sup> Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 325, summarizes the differences between Darwin and Evolutionary Anthropology: “[I]t provided reassurance that human life on earth was not governed by randomly motivated Darwinian processes, but had an overall progressive direction.” Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past*, London 1989, 68–69, 193–95, shows that many theorists of social and religious evolution did not accept the materialistic implications of Darwinism and built some sort of teleology into their own theories. They could claim, as did Max Müller, that they had been “evolutionists” long before the *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859. Recently, Ina Wunn has drawn parallels between biological and religious evolution in “The Evolution of Religion,” *Numen* 50 (2003), 387–415.

<sup>28</sup> Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, 27.

In a footnote, he added that although challenged in the 1920s, the doctrine of evolution continued to dominate studies of religion throughout the period between the wars. These are strong claims, the more so since the alleged evolutionary method is not spelled out in great detail. The fact that there was “no further need for random and haphazard judgements” is not much of an explanation in this regard. Moreover, by means of a quotation, Sharpe suggests that one of the main goals is the search for regularities: “the Reign of Law invaded every field of thought.”<sup>29</sup> The further characterization of the new method as “scientific, critical, historical and comparative” does not explain why it should be termed “evolutionary.”<sup>30</sup> Perhaps it is not so much a method that can be learned and practiced as a new way of looking at things. The claim for the importance of evolutionism in religious studies throughout the years between the wars should be critically examined. The Dutch evidence — as I will show in the final part of this paper — apparently does not corroborate this claim.

## II. Basic Assumptions

During his entire career Cornelis Petrus Tiele (1830–1902) was preoccupied with the idea of religious development. One could say, with only slight exaggeration, that the development and refinement of this concept was his main concern. It was not just an important working tool, but the basic idea on which his science of religion was built. In his inaugural address of 1873, on the place of religions of nature peoples in the history of religion, he claimed that if the study of religion is to mature then it has to be conceived of as a developmental history (*ontwikkelingsgeschiedenis*).<sup>31</sup> The relevance

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<sup>29</sup> Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, 27 (referring to James Hope Moulton, *Religions and Religion*, London 1911, 7).

<sup>30</sup> Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, 31.

<sup>31</sup> Tiele, *De plaats van de godsdiensten der natuurvölker in de godsdienst-geschiedenis* (Inaugural address on the occasion of the acceptance of the professorship of the Remonstrant Brotherhood, Leiden, February 13, 1873), Amsterdam 1873, 7. I will use the word “development” and its derivatives to translate the Dutch word

of nature religions depends primarily on their place in the general sequence of religious development. In his first monograph on the general history of religion, *Outlines of the History of Religion to the Spread of the Universal Religions*, Tiele maintained this principle. The explicit aim here was to outline a history of religion (in the singular) and not of religions:

It is the same history, but considered from a different point of view. The first lies hidden in the last, but its object is to show how that great psychological phenomenon which we call religion has developed among the different races and peoples of the world. By it we see that all religions, even those of highly civilised nations, have grown up from the same simple germs, and by it, again, we learn the causes why these germs have in some cases attained such a rich and admirable development, and in others scarcely grew at all.<sup>32</sup>

In this way the essential unity of religion is presupposed, whereas differences can be explained by reference to various stages of development.

The germination metaphor suggests a biological model of development, which is conceived of as proceeding gradually. The same issue was already addressed in earlier texts, where Tiele focused on the problem of classification. A good example is his book *The Religion of Zarathustra* (1864), which, in the final chapter, aims to determine the place of Parsism in religious history. Contrary to Max Müller, Tiele did not want to categorize religions on the basis of linguistic evidence. He distinguished two types of classification: the genealogical type, which asks about the origin and mutual relationship between religions, and the morphological one, which looks at the nature and stage of development of a particular religion. Tiele was particularly interested in this

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*ontwikkeling*; the term “evolution” is only used when the Dutch original has *evolutie*, which to Dutch ears is strongly linked with the notion of Darwinian evolution.

<sup>32</sup> Tiele, *Geschiedenis van den godsdienst tot aan de heerschappij der Wereldgodsdiensten*, Amsterdam 1876, ix. The English translation (quoted here) appeared as *Outlines of the History of Religion to the Spread of the Universal Religions*, London 1877 (p. x). It should be noted that the original Dutch title has *wereldgodsdiensten* (= “world religions”). An equivalent used by Tiele is *universalistische godsdiensten*, which is best translated as “universalistic religions.”



last type, which made it possible to construe a scheme of the development of religion (in the singular). He claimed that the development of all religions is bound by the same fixed laws. There are four periods, which follow each other regularly and in the same order: the worship of nature, the mythological phase, the philosophical-dogmatic period, and, finally, the well-known triad of Buddhism, Christianity and "Mohammedanism," "which we could call the universalistic or world religions."<sup>33</sup> This classification has a clear chronological dimension: no religion reaches the later phases without first passing through the earlier stages. We can be certain about this, because the most highly developed religions still show clear marks of having ascended gradually from the lowest stage.<sup>34</sup>

In the *Outlines of the History of Religion*, Tiele wanted to give scholars and lay people a general survey which could "serve as a kind of guide or travelling-book on their journey through the immense fairyland of human faith and hope."<sup>35</sup> The short introduction informs the reader about the basics of Tiele's approach:

The history of religion is not content with describing special religions (*hierog-raphy*), or with relating their vicissitudes and metamorphoses (the history of religions); its aim is to show how religion, considered generally as the relation between man and the superhuman powers in which he believes, has developed in the course of ages among different nations and races, and, through these, in humanity at large.<sup>36</sup>

Religion is essentially a "universal human phenomenon"<sup>37</sup> and its various stages can be traced through the course of history. This does

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<sup>33</sup> Tiele, *De Godsdienst van Zarathustra van haar ontstaan in Baktrië tot den val van het Oud-Perzische Rijk*, Haarlem 1864, 275.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 271.

<sup>35</sup> Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion* (1877), viii (this remark is not in the Dutch original).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 1f. (italics in the original). The Dutch original does not speak about race but about *volkenfamiliën* ("families of peoples"). For a discussion of Tiele's definition of religion see Molendijk, "Tiele on Religion."

<sup>37</sup> Tiele, *Geschiedenis van den godsdienst* (1876), 8 (my translation); *Outlines of the History of Religion* (1877), 6.

not imply a unilinear development in the sense that all religions “were derived from one single prehistoric religion.” It is “not improbable” that different families of religions sprang from different origins. Tiele thought this to be an issue for further research.

What was of major importance for Tiele here is, “that all changes and transformations in religions, whether they appear from a subjective point of view to indicate decay or progress, are the results of natural growth, and find in it their best explanation.”<sup>38</sup> Consequently, supernatural explanations were excluded in the science of religion. Tiele listed the various factors which influence the process of development: “The history of religion shows how this development is determined by the character of nations and races, as well as by the influence of the circumstances surrounding them, and of special individuals, and it exhibits the established laws by which this development is controlled.”<sup>39</sup> On the one hand, Tiele allowed for “special individuals” to influence the course of historical development, on the other, he wanted to establish “laws” of religious development. The tension here cannot be overlooked.

A couple of years earlier, in 1874, Tiele had published a large article concerning this issue, which not only specified his view of religious development, but also the laws which governed it.<sup>40</sup> The arti-

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<sup>38</sup> Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion* (1877), 2; *Geschiedenis van den godsdienst* (1876), 3.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 2 (I have slightly adapted the translation according to the Dutch original); *Geschiedenis van den godsdienst* (1876), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Tiele, “Over de wetten der ontwikkeling van den godsdienst,” *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 8 (1874), 225–62 (signed: March 1874); shortened French translation: “Les lois du développement religieux,” in *Revue politique et littéraire*, 2<sup>ème</sup> sér. 11 (1876), 154–59 (“D’après M.[onsieur] C.P. Tiele,” translated by C. Vincens). On another occasion I hope to devote some pages to Tiele’s discussions with the theologian Jacobus Isaac Doedes (1817–1897), professor at the conservative theological faculty of the University of Utrecht, and the Jena theologian Otto Pfeleiderer (1839–1908), who would become one of the leading German scholars in religion and philosophy after his appointment at the University of Berlin in 1875. Pfeleiderer attacked Tiele’s concept of development as such, whereas Doedes casted doubt on the historical character of the morphological type of development and accused Tiele of making

cle is divided into four parts: 1) the course of development; 2) conditions of development (general laws); 3) special laws of development; and 4) the general law of development. The *course* of development is what Tiele elsewhere called "the morphology of religion." What does the structural development of religion look like? Tiele described the course of development explicitly in terms of expansion, from family to tribal to national and, finally, to world religion.<sup>41</sup> Parallel to this, the forms and contents of religious thinking and inclination (*gezindheid*) develop, which again influence religious practice. Sacrifice, for instance, is no longer a way of manipulating the gods, but a way to appease and to thank God ("thy will be done"). In sum, religion becomes more rational, superior and pure.<sup>42</sup>

However, this is not a necessary development, taking place as a matter of course. Certain *conditions* have to be fulfilled, and in this context, Tiele formulated two general laws of the development of religion. The first law says that the need for the development of religion occurs only in those cases where the advancement of "general education" (civilization) takes place first. This so-called Law of the Unity of the Human Mind (or Spirit) claims that the advancement of civilization precedes and encourages the advancement of religion. For the liberal Protestant Tiele, it was evident that man needs unity and harmony in his spiritual life, and that there is no conflict between religion and civilization; between faith and knowledge.<sup>43</sup> This means, again, that education should not be considered to be detrimental to religion; on the contrary, it is a great aid to religious development.

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unwarranted assumptions; cf. J.I. Doedes, *De toepassing van de ontwikkelingstheorie niet aantebevelen voor de Geschiedenis der Godsdiensten*, Utrecht 1874; Tiele, "De ontwikkelingsgeschiedenis van den godsdienst en de hypotheze waarvan zij uitgaat," *De Gids* 38/2 (1874), 421–50; J.I. Doedes, "Over de ontwikkelingshypotheze in verband met de geschiedenis der godsdiensten," *Stemmen voor Waarheid en Vrede* 11 (1874), 771–88; O. Pfleiderer, "Zur Frage nach Anfang und Entwicklung der Religion," in *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie* 1 (1875), 65–116.

<sup>41</sup> Tiele, "Over de wetten," 227.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 234.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 241f.

This whole idea of religious history as striving towards purification and developing into higher stages fits in all too well with contemporary liberal Protestantism, which located revelation not only in the Sacred Scriptures, but foremost in History itself.

Besides education, Tiele was greatly in favour of free trade and exchange between people and nations, as they can bring people into contact with higher civilizations and religions. This type of liberalism completely overlooks, of course, the power relations involved in the transfer of material and spiritual goods. Tiele represents a conservative and elitist form of liberalism, which was current at the time, and he probably had no doubt at all about the fact that *we* have to educate *them*, and *they* will be thankful to *us* for doing so. The history of Dutch religion and Protestantism in particular has proved men like Tiele wrong on this point. Orthodox Protestants did not want to be educated this way and were not thankful at all. At the end of the nineteenth century they even founded their own churches, which caused enormous trauma among leading Dutch Protestants who were members of the Dutch Reformed Church or smaller liberal churches such as the Remonstrant Brotherhood to which Tiele belonged.<sup>44</sup>

The second law — the Law of Balance — also shows Tiele's own preferences. According to this law, religious development is only possible if there is a good balance between authority and freedom. The "historically given" must be taken as the "starting point of the advancement."<sup>45</sup> A necessary condition of development is the existence of a tradition, which has to be carefully guarded by a class of priests, ministers or theologians. This does not mean, Tiele added, that there is no room for freethinkers and the free preaching of the gospel. However, one should not underestimate the importance of an educated class of ministers and theologians, who protect us from falling into anarchy. Absolute democracy — Tiele explicitly denied the

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Peter van Rooden, "Secularization, Dechristianization and Rechristianization in the Netherlands," in *Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung und Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann, Göttingen 1997, 131–53.

<sup>45</sup> Tiele, "Over de wetten," 244.

“unknowing mob” the right to vote<sup>46</sup> — is as dangerous for religious development as the absolute sovereignty of one leader or an oligarchy. A “real aristocracy” — “the natural, lawful rule of the best people, regardless of rank and class” — is the ideal for which Tiele strove.<sup>47</sup>

The *special laws* of development are the Law of Reformation, the Law of Survival and Revival, and the Law of Advancement by Reaction. Development was viewed by Tiele as a gradual, and primarily “natural,” process. Artificial reformations, which do not tie in with existing traditions and forces, will not last. It makes no sense to change the outer forms. Instead, fruitful development has to begin with the improvement of religious consciousness. The second special law, which according to Tiele may be called Tylor’s law, explains that older ideas and customs may “survive” in lower circles of society and may be revived at the moment when a higher stage of religion becomes weaker. Apparitions of the Virgin Mary, simple miracles and spiritist séances are examples given by Tiele. The third law formulates the notion that some developments are reactions against earlier, one-sided forms of religion. This does not mean that there was no grain of truth in the older forms. If one realizes this and does not consider one’s own position to be absolute, a true tolerance is possible, which values diversity as conducive to progress.<sup>48</sup>

The last section deals with the *general law* of development, which essentially maintains the thesis that the highest developed religion and therewith the principle of rationality and morality in religion always triumphs over lower forms of religion, even if the former is temporarily rejected in some special cases.<sup>49</sup> The highest form of religion also maintains a balance between the ethical and the religious element. Christianity has not yet reached this final balance, but if it develops into the spiritual worship of God as the Father of all people, which reveals

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 247.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 248.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 258f. Tiele referred here to Samuel Johnson, *Oriental Religions and Their Relation to Universal Religion*, 2 vols., London 1879, I, 18f.

<sup>49</sup> Tiele, “Over de wetten,” 261.

itself in the form of the compassionate love of fellow human beings, then at that time it will be, by forming the “foundation of true, complete humanity,” the religion of the whole of mankind.<sup>50</sup> With this, we have reached Tiele’s final verdict on the laws of religious development.

### *III. Development and Classification (The Gifford Lectures)*

The importance of the idea of development for Tiele has already been recognized early. In his obituary of Tiele, Pierre Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848–1920) stated that it was the core idea of his entire science of religion.<sup>51</sup> More recently, Tiele’s Gifford Lectures, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, were labelled the “clearest and most adamant post-Darwinian use and defence of the concept of development.”<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the first part of the Gifford Lectures, the so-called morphology of religion, can be considered as Tiele’s major discussion on the topic. Here, he dealt with the *morphai* (the “ever-changing” elements of religion), whereas the second (“ontological”) part of the Gifford Lectures investigated the “true being or essence of religion.”<sup>53</sup> In the eighth lecture of the first series Tiele briefly looked back on his earlier work, especially on the article about the laws of development of 1874, which was discussed above.

Much of what I then wrote I should now formulate otherwise, and I have indeed several times modified my university lectures on the subject accordingly. And I must now admit that the title of the article was not quite accurate. I should not have said “Laws of the Development of Religion,” but “Laws of Development

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 262.

<sup>51</sup> P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, “Cornelis Petrus Tiele,” *Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen* (1902), 125–54; repr. in id., *Portretten en Krieken*, Haarlem 1909, 82–120, at p. 116.

<sup>52</sup> Tim Murphy, “The Concept ‘Entwicklung’ in German *Religionswissenschaft*: Before and After Darwin,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 11 (1999), 8–23, at p. 15. Without any noticeable hesitation Murphy includes the Dutchman Tiele in the “German schools of *Religionswissenschaft*,” which employ an “inherently anti-empiricist and anti-materialist” concept of development.

<sup>53</sup> Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, 2 vols, Edinburgh and London, 1897–1899, II, 188.

in their Application to Religion." For in point of fact I only meant even then to maintain that the laws which govern the development of the human mind hold true of religion also, though their application may differ in form and in details. But I still adhere to the article as a whole, and have not altered my opinion in point of principle. If such laws — or call them the rules, forms, necessary conditions, if you will, by which spiritual development is bound — did not exist, and if we were unable to form some idea of them corresponding with reality, it would be better to give up the science of religion altogether as a fond illusion. We should not even be entitled to speak of development at all, for this idea necessarily involves that of rules and laws.<sup>54</sup>

This quotation indicates both how important and, at the same time, how complex the concepts of development and laws are.

In the following I will highlight how the idea of development functions in the first series of the Gifford Lectures. In my analysis I will also make use of the influential article "Religions," which Tiele wrote for the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1886), and the short manual of his philosophy of religion *Outlines of the Science of Religion* (1901), which presents the views, so eloquently stated in the Gifford Lectures, in a much briefer compass.<sup>55</sup> Firstly, I will consider the actual concept of religious development in more depth (a); secondly, the basic dichotomy between nature and ethical religions will be discussed (b); and finally, Tiele's idea of the laws of development will be addressed (c).

(a) According to Tiele, the metaphor of *development* is borrowed from natural history, and is only applied by analogy to the spiritual life of man. "Development is growth. From the green bud the flower bursts forth as from its sheath, and reveals the wealth and brilliance of its colours. From the tiny acorn springs up the mighty oak in all its majesty."<sup>56</sup> The examples given all point to organic growth: things develop out of germs that potentially contain the later phases of development. If one destroys one thing and puts another in its place,

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<sup>54</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 214.

<sup>55</sup> Tiele, "Religions," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (9th ed.), vol. 20, Edinburgh 1886, 358–71; Tiele, *Hoofdtrekken der Godsdienstwetenschap*, Amsterdam 1901.

<sup>56</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 28.

this is not called development. Tiele mentioned two implications, firstly, that the object undergoing development is a unity, and, secondly, “that each phase of the evolution has its value, importance, and right of existence, and that it is necessary to give birth to a higher phase, and continues to act in that higher phase.”<sup>57</sup> Instead of giving his own definition, Tiele quoted “an American scholar,” who characterized development as follows: “a continuous progressive change according to certain laws and by means of resident forces.”<sup>58</sup> One would like to have had a somewhat more precise definition.

Tiele specified the type of history he had in mind in such statements as religions die, but religion itself does not. Ultimately, he was not interested in local or temporal religious developments but in the development of religion in mankind. “Its development may be described as the evolution of the religious idea in history, or better as the progress of the religious man, or of mankind as religious by nature.”<sup>59</sup> As the core of religion, according to Tiele, lies in the inner disposition towards God, outer forms change due to inner change. In several senses of the word this is an “idealist” view of religious development. In all the changes and vicissitudes, Tiele discerned “not a puzzling, but a grand and instructive spectacle — the labour of the human spirit to find fitter and fuller expression for the religious idea as it becomes ever clearer, and for religious needs as they become ever loftier — not the mere fickle play of human caprice, but, to use the language of faith, the eternal working of the divine Spirit.”<sup>60</sup> In this way, the history of religion is given a teleological perspective, which accords perfectly with Tiele’s liberal Protestantism.

(b) After this exposition of the concept of development, Tiele treated the *stages* of development. Three lectures, discussing the “lowest

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 30.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 30.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 38. In the Dutch edition the passage between dashes is emphasized; cf. Tiele, *Inleiding tot de godsdienstwetenschap* (1897–1899), 2 vols, 2nd [slightly] revised ed., Amsterdam 1900, I, 37.



nature-religions," the "highest nature-religions," and the "ethical religions" successively, are concerned with this subject. I will not summarize these chapters, but highlight the basic dichotomy between *nature and ethical religions* which underlies Tiele's treatment. Firstly, however, it has to be stressed again that in this view historical research involves a classification of religions. Thus, Tiele spent much time finding an adequate categorization. He started by pointing to the fact that the old classifications by scholars such as Hegel are no longer of any use, because they were based on insufficient data.<sup>61</sup> In his contribution to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Tiele gave Max Müller some credit, but criticized Müller's view that the classification of religions runs parallel to that of languages: "[T]he farther history advances the more does religion become independent of both language and nationality."<sup>62</sup>

Although the difference between nature and ethical religions is one of principle, the transition from the former to the latter cannot be described in terms of a rift. However, it is not a smooth, uncomplicated development either. On the one hand, the element of continuity is emphasized: for instance, ethical attributes can also be ascribed to the gods at the level of nature religions, but in these cases the "ethical personifications are simply incorporated in the old system, and not only not distinguished from the nature gods, but even subordinated to them."<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, the transition from the higher nature religions to ethical forms of religions apparently implies a discontinuity: it "is invariably accomplished by means of a designated reformation, or sometimes even by a revolution."<sup>64</sup> The opposition is described in various ways. Whereas nature religions tend to polytheism, ethical religions tend to monotheism. Ethical religions do not depend on the common belief in national traditions but on the belief in a doctrine of salvation, and are founded by individuals or in some cases by a body of priests or teachers. Tiele did not stop at this point but discussed the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid. 58.

<sup>62</sup> Tiele, "Religions," 365.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 366.

<sup>64</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 121.

various “subdivisions of each of the two principal categories” in some detail.<sup>65</sup>

I will not go into the various ramifications and stages within the history of nature religions, but turn to Tiele’s discussion of ethical religions. He started with a question which had already been raised by Abraham Kuenen in his Hibbert Lectures:<sup>66</sup> “What right have we to divide them into nomistic or nomothetic communities, founded on a law or Holy Scripture, and universal or world religions, which start from principles and maxims, the latter being only three — Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism?”<sup>67</sup> Although the category “world religions” may have some practical use (“to distinguish the three religions which have found their way to different races and peoples and all of which profess the intention to conquer the world”), Tiele preferred to drop the term, which he had used himself many times in his earlier work.<sup>68</sup> This is not to say that there is no difference between these three

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<sup>65</sup> Tiele, “Religions,” 366f., where he made the following adjustment: “The different stages of development have been characterized by C.P. Tiele (*Outlines of the History of Religion*, §3) as follows: (a) a period in which animism generally prevailed, still represented by the so-called nature religions (in the narrower sense), or rather by the polydaemonistic magical tribal religions; (b) polytheistic national religions resting on a traditional doctrine; (c) nomistic . . . religions, or religious communities founded on a law or sacred writing and subduing polytheism more or less completely by pantheism or monotheism; (d) universal or world-religions, which start from principles and maxims. Though in general maintaining this division, at least for practical use, if we wish to draw up a morphological classification of religions, we shall have to modify and complete it, and to arrange the different stages under the two principal categories of nature religions and ethical religions.” For a summary see Jonathan Z. Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious,” in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor, Chicago and London 1998, 269–84, at p. 269f.

<sup>66</sup> Abraham Kuenen, *National Religions and Universal Religions*, London 1882.

<sup>67</sup> Tiele, “Religions,” 368.

<sup>68</sup> An early example is Tiele, *De Godsdienst van Zarathustra*, 2, 275f.; cf. Jan N. Bremmer, “Methodologische en terminologische notities bij de opkomst van de godsdienstgeschiedenis in de achttiende en negentiende eeuw,” *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57 (2003), 308–21, at p. 317f.; cf. Tiele, “Religions,” 367: “Strictly speaking, there can be no more than one universal or world religion, and if one of the

religions, on the one hand, and "Confucianism, Brahmanism, Jainism, Mazdaism, and Judaism on the other."<sup>69</sup> Tiele made an attempt to distinguish the two categories as follows: particularistic versus universalistic (not universal); national versus human; and those bound to special doctrines and rites, versus others which, although equally embodied in doctrines and rites, are "nevertheless really free from them," as they start from principles and maxims.<sup>70</sup>

This does not mean that the three universalistic religious communities are on the same level: "Both Islam and Buddhism, if not national, are only relatively universalistic, and show the one-sidedness, the one of the Semitic, the other of Aryan race."<sup>71</sup> Whereas Islam exalts the divine and opposes it to the human, Buddhism neglects the divine and preaches salvation through self-renunciation. Moreover, Buddhism is atheistic in its origin and becomes easily infested by the "most childish superstitions." Evidently, Islam is worse than Buddhism — because of its ritualistic features it "is little better than an extended Judaism." Buddhism comes close to Christianity because its worship is not "necessarily bound to place or time." However, because of its capacity to adapt itself to ever new circumstances, "which is the natural result of its purely spiritual character, Christianity ranks incommensurably high above both its rivals."<sup>72</sup> Tiele added a footnote to stress that this statement is not a confession but is made from a scientific point of view. In

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existing religions is so potentially it has not yet reached its goal. This is a matter of belief which lies beyond the limits of scientific classification."

<sup>69</sup> Tiele, "Religions," p. 368.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 369; cf. Tiele, *Elements*, I, 294: "In the higher ethical religions, although the law is not abrogated, and is sometimes even extended, the doctrines deemed essential are gradually summarised in several leading precepts, until, when we reach the highest stage of religious development known to us, the great all-embracing principle of Love, expressed in the two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets, is revealed as the perennial source of true religious life."

<sup>71</sup> Tiele, "Religions," 369.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 369. Tiele referred here to the work of the German liberal theologian Richard Rothe (1799–1867), who had put much emphasis on the flexibility of the Christian religion.

the Gifford Lectures he argued that these religions were called “ethical,” “because, arising out of an ethical awakening, they aim at a more or less lofty ethical ideal, an ideal no longer merely co-ordinated with religion, but conceived as God’s own will, and an emanation of His being — or in more abstract philosophical language, an ideal objectivised in, and projected into the conception of God.”<sup>73</sup> Whereas Tiele subscribed wholeheartedly to the differentiation thesis (in the course of history religion becomes a more and more autonomous phenomenon), this did not imply that religion and the ethical element were to be separated from each other. The universalistic tendency of the “ethical religions” implied an inclusiveness: all fellow human beings were to be included in the ultimate religion, which should evolve out of — liberal Protestant — Christianity.

(c) In the first series of the Gifford Lectures, Tiele readjusted his views concerning the *laws* of religious development. Firstly, he rejected the idea of special laws of *religious* development; secondly, he clearly distinguished the (general) “laws which govern the development of the human mind” from the laws of natural science,<sup>74</sup> and, thirdly, he clarified which “laws” were actually basic to religious development. It remains difficult to specify exactly Tiele’s view in this matter, as we find different laws of development in his last book *Outlines of the Science of Religion*, which appeared only a couple of years after the Gifford Lectures. To a large extent, the difference can be seen as a difference of expression, stating more or less the same insights, but nevertheless, it was apparently not easy for Tiele to settle the whole issue in an unambiguous way.

In the *eighth* chapter of the Gifford Lectures, Tiele formulated two laws: (1) the Law of the Unity of the Human Mind (essentially the

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<sup>73</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 120f.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 214–19, esp. p. 218: “Let us admit . . . that we cannot determine by fixed laws what must happen, because it does not only depend solely on conditions that we can ascertain, but also on the incalculable element of individuality, of the personal free-will of each individual.”

same law as stated in his article of 1874 discussed above),<sup>75</sup> and (2) the Law of Intellectual Intercourse, which runs as follows: "All development, apart from the natural capabilities of men and peoples, results from the stimulus given to self-consciousness by contact with a different stage of development, whether higher or lower."<sup>76</sup> If we apply this general law to religion, two "practical rules" follow from it: (1) "The religion that will attain the highest development is that which is most alive to the genuinely religious elements in other forms," and (2) "Religious development is best promoted by the free intercourse of its most diverse manifestations."<sup>77</sup> This conforms perfectly, of course, to the idea of growth by assimilation, both in cultural and religious ways: "religion assimilates whatever is good and true in general culture; and each form of religion assimilates whatever is true and good in other forms."<sup>78</sup> The first law finds its foundation in the unity of the human mind, the second in the unity of the human species. Both laws can be seen as expressions of the "great Law of Assimilation," which is the most important factor of development.<sup>79</sup>

The *ninth* chapter of the Gifford Lectures addresses the issue of the "influence of the individual in the development of religion."<sup>80</sup> This influence should not be underrated in Tiele's view, as "all progress, reform, discovery, invention, must have originated in the brain of a single individual."<sup>81</sup> "Religion develops through the medium of persons."<sup>82</sup> Because so much depends on the creativity of individuals, there is an

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 232; cf. Tiele, "Over de wetten der ontwikkeling van den godsdienst," and Tiele, *Hoofdtrekken*, 47f.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 239; cf. Tiele, *Hoofdtrekken*, 48–50.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 239f.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 242.

<sup>79</sup> Tiele, *Inleiding tot de Godsdienstwetenschap*, I, 220. This remark is an addition Tiele made in the revised, second Dutch edition, and is, therefore, not found in the English edition of the Gifford Lectures; cf. Tiele, *Elements*, I, 242. Tiele did not elaborate on this "great law."

<sup>80</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 244.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. 246.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. 271.

element that cannot be explained in (religious) development.<sup>83</sup> Interestingly enough, in this chapter, which focuses on the role of the individual, and thus points to the inexplicable element in history, Tiele also elaborated on the continuity of human history in general and religious history in particular, which leads to the formulation of the “great law of *the continuity of religious development*.”<sup>84</sup> Whether or not this is actually a law in any precise sense of the word, it is fundamental for Tiele’s understanding of development. Even in periods of apparent decay, “there arise mighty spirits from whom emanates a new revelation of religious life, a higher than the preceding, yet rooted in it.”<sup>85</sup> Development must not be seen as the “supersession of the old by something new, something different,” but as “growth from a germ, in which lies latent everything that later springs from it.”<sup>86</sup>

Besides the laws of the unity of the human mind, of human intercourse, and of progressive development, in his *Outlines* (1901) Tiele also listed the Law of Balance or Synthesis, which we already encountered in the article of 1874. Applied to religion, it means that there has to be a balance between authority and tradition, on the one hand, and freedom of individual consciousness, on the other.<sup>87</sup> In the Gifford Lectures Tiele was less outspoken. He more or less rejected the law of self-recovery by reaction, stressed the need for an equilibrium between various *directions* of development,<sup>88</sup> and concluded by saying: “If . . . there be any such law at all, we prefer to call it the law of progress by synthesis or reconciliation. But we shall see afterwards that it is only one phase, a single manifestation, of the main law that governs all development, including that of religion.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 258.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 271 (emphasis in the original); cf. Tiele, *Hoofdtrekken*, 50–52.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 268.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 272.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Tiele, *Hoofdtrekken*, 52–54.

<sup>88</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 151: “By the term direction I understand a spiritual current which sweeps along a single principle of religion, or some fundamental religious idea, more or less regardless of others, to its extreme consequences.”

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 205.

This main law is addressed in the *tenth* and last chapter of the first series of the Gifford Lectures about the essentials of the development of religion. Ultimately it is a twofold process: "ever-increasing differentiation, coupled with efforts for reconciliation and unity."<sup>90</sup> I will give a somewhat longer quotation to show how Tiele saw this as an interrelated process:

From an originally somewhat motley and chaotic, yet monotonous, multiplicity of forms, several more developed groups gradually detach themselves, formed by the confluence of a number of hitherto distinct modes of worship. This is the genesis of a certain unification, and the beginning of differentiation at the same time, because new and more pronounced varieties constantly arise. And so the process goes on: union and partition, the formation of great unities which again break up into new varieties, until new combinations are again effected. Yet the general tendency of religious development indicates ever-diminishing particularism, ever-increasing universalism, and an aspiration, whether conscious or not, for true catholicity.<sup>91</sup>

The dialectic between differentiation and unification is to be read within a teleological framework. The articulation of different forms does not preclude a tendency to unification and simplification, as it is also called, by which Tiele meant that religions are "reduced to a fixed system, to a few cardinal points, and at last to a single fundamental principle."<sup>92</sup>

Tiele pointed to a similar dialectic regarding the relationship between religions and other cultural domains. On the one hand, religion "conquers a province of its own, and in that province attains ever greater independence . . . but not in the sense of being indifferent to the influence of advancing civilisation and the development of art, science, morality, and society."<sup>93</sup> According to the law of the unity of the human mind, the ever-growing independence of the religious sphere does not preclude efforts "to reconcile religion with the interests of science and

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<sup>90</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 295.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 289.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* 294. By this principle is meant, no doubt, the Christian principle of love.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 296.

art, of philosophy and morality, of society and the State.”<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, the development of religion was related by Tiele to a progress of self-consciousness. Man “becomes ever more clearly conscious of what he is and what he requires as a religious being, and of the nature and the demands of the religion within him.”<sup>95</sup> The engine, so to speak, of religious development is the growth of (religious) self-consciousness, which is not to be equated with a plea for a purely spiritual religion. Religion was located by Tiele primarily in the inwardness of human beings, in the inner relationship between man and God which is the main topic of the second series of the Gifford Lectures, where “we shall . . . endeavour to form an idea, not merely of the development of, but of the essential and permanent elements in religion, and thus ascend to its true and ultimate source.”<sup>96</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

On various occasions Tiele noted that without the concepts of development and the laws of development there would be no science of religion in the proper sense of the word. In his paper for *The World's Parliament of Religions* (Chicago, 1893), he proclaimed: “What should be done first of all is to trace religion in the course of its development, that is to say, in its life, to inquire what every family of religions, as for instance the Aryan and the Semitic, what every particular religion, what the great religious persons have contributed to this development, to what laws and conditions this development is subjected and in what it really consists.”<sup>97</sup> This objective is to be achieved in the morphological part of Tiele's work, as exemplified by the first series of the Gifford Lectures. The assumptions involved in this programme were mentioned by Tiele himself: the idea of the unity of the human and the human species, the idea of continuity and progress, and the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 298.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 299f.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 302.

<sup>97</sup> Tiele, “On the Study of Comparative Theology,” in *The World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. John Henry Barrows, 2 vols., London 1893, I, 583–90, at p. 589.



comparative method which brings non-simultaneous phenomena into line.<sup>98</sup>

History and comparison go hand in hand: "[L]ike every genuine scientific study, historical investigations, if they are to bear fruit, must be comparative." Thus, we may determine the similarities and the differences between religious phenomena and religions as such.<sup>99</sup> The introduction of the comparative method into the history of religions is one way to explain the fact that these early practitioners saw the study of religion as a "science," based on induction and sound reasoning. Here we should note that Tiele himself was attacked for his allegedly speculative way of construing a developmental history of religion. It is not the genealogy of religions, which traced actual dependencies, but the morphology, which met criticism. Tiele's ultimate goal was to outline the development of religion in mankind: "the progress of the religious man, or of mankind as religious by nature."<sup>100</sup> In the various religious manifestations, he looked for an ever-increasing — one could almost say — purification of religion, which gets ever more interiorized, spiritual and ethical. At the same time he also detected a movement which synthesizes the two main directions in religious history, the "theanthropic" and the "theocratic." The former is dominant in Aryan religions and conceives of the deity as immanent in man; the latter is dominant in Semitic religions and sees god as a ruler outside man.<sup>101</sup> The two elements are brought together as follows: "In adoration are united those two phases of religion which are termed by the schools 'transcendent' and 'immanent' respectively, or which, in religious language, represent the believer as 'looking up to God as the Most High', and as 'feeling himself akin to God as his Father'."<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 170.

<sup>99</sup> Tiele, "Religions," 358; cf. Tiele, "Theologie en Godsdienstwetenschap," *De Gids* 30/2 (1866), 205–44, at p. 216.

<sup>100</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 32.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Hans G. Kippenberg, "Religionsentwicklung," in *Max Webers 'Religionssystematik'*, ed. Hans G. Kippenberg and Martin Riesebrodt, Tübingen 2001, 77–99, esp. pp. 91–93.

<sup>102</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, II, 198; cf. Molendijk, "Tiele on Religion."

The core of the critique concerned the combination of history and classification. History is about real developments, his opponents objected, whereas Tiele's morphology classifies different types of religion and "presents" this classification as a developmental history. In the preface of the *Outlines of the History of Religion*, Tiele thanked his "friend and colleague Dr H. Kern, who knows all, or nearly all, about ancient India, and who made such a profound study of German mythology," for his kind review of the Dutch edition which had appeared a year earlier. However, Tiele did not address the criticism that Kern had made: that every classification will collide to some extent with historiography.<sup>103</sup> Even Tiele's close colleagues had difficulties with this type of "history," as he was well aware: "My old friend and colleague, the late Professor Acquoy, an authority of the highest rank among the historians of Christianity, could not speak without a smile of what he called, with a kind of ironical respect, the higher kinds of historical writing, and particularly of what he termed nomological hierography. No serious historian need trouble himself with the question whether there is a law in accordance to which history grows. 'Let the philosopher study this question *if he pleases*'. Well, we do please to examine the question."<sup>104</sup> Tiele was not thrown off balance by such remarks, and proceeded along his own path.

P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye was also rather sceptical about Tiele's laws of religious development. In his obituary, he cited the above-mentioned Acquoy, who had written in his manual of church history that no historical law had been discovered so far, and that such laws probably lie outside the scope of the human mind, in which case it was improbable that any human being will ever discover them.<sup>105</sup> The irony is evident. In the introduction to the first edition

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<sup>103</sup> Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion* (1877), xi; H. Kern, Review of Tiele, *Geschiedenis van den godsdienst* (1876), *De Gids* 41/2 (1877), 365–72.

<sup>104</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 215 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>105</sup> P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, "Cornelis Petrus Tiele," 118; cf. J.G.R. Acquoy, *Handleiding tot de kerkgeschiedvorsing en kerkgeschiedschrijving*, 's-Gravenhage 1894, 105.

of his famous handbook, Chantepie de la Saussaye pointed to the complexities surrounding the concept of religious development, and in the second edition he dropped the idea of a developmental history of religion (in the singular) altogether.<sup>106</sup> W.B. Kristensen (1867–1953) was critical of evolutionism,<sup>107</sup> as was his pupil Gerardus van der Leeuw. In his contribution on this topic to the second edition of the German authoritative encyclopaedia *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Van der Leeuw rejected the idea of religious progress because it did not comply with the unique and absolute character of religious experience.<sup>108</sup> Phenomenology of religion, as it emerged on Dutch soil at the beginning of the twentieth century and culminated in Van der Leeuw's *Phänomenologie der Religion* (1933), had great difficulties with the idea of progressive religious development, and the idea slowly faded away in Dutch science of religion, as it did in cultural anthropology.<sup>109</sup> Contrary to Eric Sharpe's suggestion, evolutionism was not dominant in Dutch religious studies throughout the years between the wars.<sup>110</sup>

After the paradigm of development was abandoned it was hard to see how it could have been so influential. As Evans-Pritchard said in his 1950 Marett Lecture: "It will readily be seen how a combination of the notion of scientific law and that of progress leads in anthropology, as in the philosophy of history, to procrustean stages, the

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<sup>106</sup> P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 2 vols., Freiburg i.B. 1887–1889; 2nd ed., 1897, II, vi: "Das Buch bringt Geschichte der Religionen, keine Entwicklungsgeschichte der Religion."

<sup>107</sup> Kristensen, *Inleiding tot de godsdienstgeschiedenis*, Arnhem 1955, 23.

<sup>108</sup> G. van der Leeuw, "Religion III: Religionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung," in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., vol. IV, Tübingen 1930, cols. 1875–77.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Molendijk, "At the Cross-Roads: Early Dutch Science of Religion in International Perspective," in *Man, Meaning, & Mystery: Hundred Years of History of Religions in Norway. The Heritage of W. Brede Kristensen*, ed. Sigurd Hjelde, Leiden 2000, 19–56; Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 287, and *passim*.

<sup>110</sup> Sharpe, *Comparative Religion*, 27, n. 1.

presumed inevitability of which gives them a normative character.”<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the idea of development had been the basis of a major current in cultural research. It functioned as a paradigm, as is evident from the fact that Tiele stuck to it (almost unreflectively) in the face of strong criticism from colleagues, who insisted on doing “real history.” It was evident to him that the only way to relate all the different religions to each other was to place them in a scheme of development. Otherwise there would be no science of religion but only history of religions. To simply create a classification with Christianity at the top would be unscientific and unhistorical. From Tiele’s point of view, the various types of religion arise in history and develop (morphologically spoken) out of each other, and thus, the variations can be understood in a historical way. Therefore, classification and history are not incompatible but are inextricably bound up with each other.

Ultimately it is Tiele’s concept of history which makes it hard for present-day scholars to understand him. The problem is not so much the notion of the *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* or “the idea that in the absence of historical evidence, the earlier phases could be reconstructed by using data derived from the observation of peoples still living in earlier ‘stages’ of development,”<sup>112</sup> but the teleological view of history. Walter Benjamin tells the famous story of the angel of history who would have liked to stay and mourn the losses but is driven into the future by a storm coming from Paradise. As he turns his back to the future, the angel sees “*eine einzige Katastrophe, die unablässig Trümmer auf Trümmer häuft.*” This storm, which we call progress, leaves behind a pile of debris mounting to the sky.<sup>113</sup> Tiele’s “observant spectator,” however, saw something completely different. Beneath change and kaleidoscopic

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<sup>111</sup> E.E. Evans-Pritchard, “Social Anthropology: Past and Present” (1950), in id. *Essays in Social Anthropology*, London 1962, 13–28, at p.17.

<sup>112</sup> Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, 15.

<sup>113</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften*, Frankfurt a.M. (Suhrkamp) 1977, 255.

variety he detected constant progress: "Human society and culture, as a whole, do not only assume new forms, but are continually growing; and these new forms are on the whole richer, ampler, purer and higher than those they supersede."<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Tiele, *Elements*, I, 263.

## BOOK REVIEWS

BIRGIT MEYER AND PETER PELS (eds.), *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment*—Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2003 (viii, 390 p.) ISBN 0-8047-4464-5 (pbk.) \$22.95.

Theorizing the relationship between magic and modernity usually starts with a sharp differentiation between these two highly biased terms, often characterizing magic as the ‘antithesis of modernity’ or modernity’s ‘irrational other side.’ Magic has been described either as preceding modern science and enlightenment or as being part of a counter-movement against the predicaments of modern ‘disenchantment’ of the world. The project of ‘exorcising the West’s demons’—to take Charles Zika’s apt notion—to the chronological margins of a long gone past also included exorcising magic to the geographical or cultural margins: to the underdeveloped, primitive, and uncivilized regions of the world. Even if the complexity of the relationship between magic and modernity is acknowledged, underlying assumptions about their mutual exclusion and simplistic constructions of Western culture are easily discernable.

This volume collects contributions from a conference “Magic and Modernity” at the University of Amsterdam in 1997 that challenge that rhetoric. They “assume that both the modern rationalist and the magically backward subject constituted by such theories are modernist myths that need to be scrutinized by empirical research” (P. Pels in his *Introduction*, p. 31). By drawing on extensive research in various cultures and comparing these to Western traditions and phenomena, the contributions intend to provide “theoretical insights” in order “to explain the magicity of modernity’s attempt to oppose magic, to provide directions for research into the magic of modernity itself, and to make us play with the extent to which we have indeed never been modern” (P. Pels, p. 38, alluding to Bruno Latour who is a crucial reference point for most of the book’s chapters). Despite the exemplary nature of the diverse articles and their wide range of topics, this task is impressively accomplished, particularly because Peter Pels’ brilliant introduction (pp. 1–38) fleshes out the theoretical background and problematics of the issue as well as the shared objectives of the contributions.

To demonstrate the “magicality of modernity” the articles assemble a wide range of material — from India, the Netherlands Indies, Africa and Haiti, to North America and Europe. Often, they stimulate discussion with thought-provoking anecdotes and arguments. For instance, Gyan Prakash reports the letter of a family father from a Bengali village in India to the California Institute of Technology asking to bury the enclosed umbilical chord of his daughter in the Institute’s ground according to the customs of “our culture” in order to make sure that his daughter will be able to study at “one of the greatest Institutes in the world” (p. 39). Birgit Meyer analyzes Ghanaian popular cinema and shows “how a quintessentially modern medium like film . . . has been appropriated in order to express people’s concerns about the hidden presence of the occult in modern urban society” (p. 202), ending up with the thesis that “the visualization of the dark, secret aspects lurking behind the surface of modern city life concerns an ‘enlightenment’ in another sense than usually intended by modernist protagonists” (p. 203). The major role of occultism in Western modernities (the plural is conceptual in all papers, although reference to Shmuel Eisenstadt and others is lacking) is demonstrated by Peter Geschiere with a comparison between “Witch Doctors and Spin Doctors: the Role of ‘Experts’ in African and American Politics” and by Jojada Verrips’ analysis of “Modern Medicine Between Magic and Science.” The book concludes with “Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism: Another Theory of Magic” by Michael Taussig, addressing directly the subtitle of the volume with his thesis that the “real skill of the practitioner lies not in skilled concealment but in the skilled revelation of skilled concealment. Magic is efficacious not despite the trick but on account of its exposure. . . . Hence power flows not from masking but from unmasking, which masks more than masking. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno no less than Friedrich Nietzsche were correct in discerning magic in Enlightenment” (p. 273).

Wavering between tackling the “haunting of modernity by the magic it represses,” “the practical transformation of technologies of conduct,” and a critique of theories of magic and modernity which propose that “the modern study of magic is largely a study of human subjectivity” (P. Pels on pp. 30–31), all articles shed light on the complicated relationship between magic and modernity and break new ground for further research. If there is something to criticize in this volume, it is the lack of a comprehensive analytical framework of ‘magic’ and ‘modernity.’ To be sure, Peter Pels addresses this problem openly and talks of a “discursive field” on which these theories

emerge and are applied (p. 5, see also p. 16), but the problem remains that, for instance, the 'magic' of Princess Diana's fatal car crash (p. 1) is categorically something quite different than the 'Juju journalism' in Sierra Leone (Rosalind Shaw's contribution). Although the articles could be read as — persuasively — indicating that we will never be able to arrive at an etic use of the term 'magic,' through many contributions there runs a subtext that applies the very concepts that are criticized to phenomena that have hitherto not been taken serious as 'magical.' With the material at hand, the authors could have been even more courageous and searched for an alternative categorization of this discursive field, applying other terms than 'magic' and 'modernity,' perhaps along the lines of Michael Taussig's interesting remarks.

But this task will belong to future research that carries on the thought-provoking arguments outlined in *Magic and Modernity*. This volume will serve as a major reference tool in the study of occult forces and the strategies of their revelation in modern societies. It is strongly recommended for all scholars interested in contemporary religion and it provides a good basis for discussion in the classroom.

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ILKKA PYYSIÄINEN and VEIKKO ANTONEN (eds.), *Current Approaches in the Cognitive Science of Religion* — London and New York: Continuum 2002 (277 p.) ISBN 0-8264-5710-X (pbk.) £17.99.

ROBERT N. MCCAULEY and E. THOMAS LAWSON, *Bringing Ritual to Mind: Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms* — Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002 (xiii, 236 p.) ISBN 0-521-01629-0 (pbk.) £16.99.

The cognitive study of religion is a young, growing, and promising sub-field of religious studies, with an international research institute (Belfast), a dedicated book series (Altamira Press), substantial representation in journals (e.g., *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*), and an increasing number of thematic sessions at professional



association meetings. The basic premise is that religion is rooted in evolved cognitive capacities common to all humans (e.g., tendencies to think about animate and inanimate objects in certain ways). Given that these capacities are not themselves specifically religious, religion is not *sui generis*: it is defined in terms of specific ways that these universal cognitive capacities are expressed. The basic approach is to draw on experimental work in cognitive psychology in order to explain patterns in religious representations.

*Current Approaches* is an exceptional single-volume introduction to the current state of research, with overviews by most of the leading figures in the field. One of the key claims of cognitive approaches is that religion is characterized by counter-intuitive representations: “beliefs, actions and institutions [that] are simultaneously extensions and inversions of the ‘lived in’ physical worlds” and that “systematically reverse or violate a range of assumptions of intuitive epistemologies and ontologies” (215). Ilkka Pyysiäinen, for example, argues in his contribution for the presence of “counter-intuitive representations as a necessary but not sufficient criterion for religiousness,” though “not all counter-intuitiveness can be taken to be religious” (8–9). Pascal Boyer argues that religious concepts of gods and spirits “are associated with intuitions about agency, about social interaction, about moral understandings and about dead bodies” and that these concepts “gain minimal salience by including a particular kind of expectation-violation” (71–72).

Cognitive approaches have much to say about ritual. Lawson and McCauley’s paper summarize many of the main findings of *Bringing Ritual to Mind*: “the cognitive apparatus for the representation of action in general is the same system deployed for the representation of religious ritual form”; and representations of “culturally postulated superhuman agents” [they now prefer the term ‘counter-intuitive agents’] determine a number of the properties of rituals (153). Harvey Whitehouse buttresses his cognitive characterization of two ‘modes of religiosity,’ as developed in his books, *Inside the Cult* (1995) and *Arguments and Icons* (2000). Here he introduces cognitive psychological models of memory to further support his distinction between frequently repeated rituals, highly automatic and lacking official exegesis, and infrequently repeated rituals, vividly affective and sensual: the first draw on implicit memory and the latter on explicit memory. Justin L. Barrett presents empirical evidence to support two claims: “If a god is represented as a distant psychosocial being . . . believers are biased toward praying for the god to act through psychological intervention as opposed to mechanistic intervention”; “Since

religious rituals get represented using the same conceptual architecture as ordinary social causation . . . the intentions of the person performing a ritual are more important than the particular action performed" (106). Jesper Sørensen draws on cognitive linguistics to suggest that magical rituals are characterized by conceptual blending between the mental spaces of sacred and profane (with the former defined in terms of counter-intuitive representations).

Two contributions address the question of the origin of religion. Stewart Guthrie recaps his argument from *Faces in the Clouds* (1993) that religion is based in anthropomorphism: "nonhuman animals display the common denominator of religions: seeing more organization in things and events than these things and events really have" (38). Veikko Anttonen argues that a cognitive approach to religion "alters significantly the strategy needed to valorize the issue of religious origins," highlighting not historical specificity but rather the human mind's "capacity to generate types of representations and a special vocabulary for their communication" (25, 29).

Other contributions address meta-theoretical issues. Jeppe Sinding Jensen suggests, "Religion, culture and cognition are mutually reflexive and interconnected levels of explanations" (225). Pertti Saariluoma argues that cognitive theories need to pay attention to the content of as well as the categories invoked by religious concepts. Matti Kamppinen places cognitive approaches to religion in the context of philosophy of science.

Where *Current Approaches* offers a broad overview, *Bringing Ritual to Mind* makes a substantial contribution to one corner of the cognitive field, the cognitive basis of ritual forms. The book extends and clarifies aspects of the theory of ritual competence presented in the authors' *Rethinking Religion* (1990). In essence, McCauley and Lawson argue that their "ritual form hypothesis" offers a "sounder cognitive foundation for any broad theory of religious modes" than does the "frequency hypothesis" championed by Harvey Whitehouse: their model "reveals larger patterns . . . that cut across cultures and historical epochs" (6–7). Both hypotheses attempt to account for why rituals tend to cluster at two 'attractors': either infrequently repeated with a high degree of sensory and emotional stimulation or the opposite. On the frequency hypothesis, "frequently performed rituals require less sensory pageantry" (119). On the ritual form hypothesis, both variables are determined by ritual form: rituals characterized by supernatural agents tend to be infrequently repeated with a high degree of sensory stimulation; rituals characterized by supernatural instruments or patients tend to the opposite

extreme. The resulting model of ritual form, developed in exhaustive detail, is theoretically robust and rich in empirical predictions. It offers an account of “how a small set of psychological variables [e.g., sensory stimulation, tedium, habituation, memorability] exert selection pressures on *all* religious ritual systems” (179, original emphasis).

*Bringing Ritual to Mind* offers a paradigmatic example of attentiveness to both theoretical and empirical issues in the cognitive study of religion. McCauley and Lawson argue their case, contra Whitehouse, by drawing out conceptual problems in the frequency hypothesis and by demonstrating that their hypothesis is more fruitful and correct in its predictions as measured against empirical (ethnographic) evidence. Their argument is persuasive but not ironclad: the two hypotheses yield the same predictions for “the overwhelming majority of the known cases” (125); and there is relatively little ethnographic evidence for cases where predictions diverge.

These books, like other work in the cognitive study of religion, raise critical questions regarding a number of issues: relations between cognitive and cultural constraints; mechanisms of historical and cultural variability; relations between evolutionary claims and questions of origins; the applicability of scientific method to historical claims (where, as in much of astrophysics, one can observe but not experiment); the epistemological status of counter-intuitiveness; and the extent to which ‘religion’ remains viable as the marker of a distinct sphere of human thought and action.

Another critical issue is the field’s scientific status. Cognitive approaches are often held to constitute a “science” of religion, because they employ naturalistic, materialistic premises and use scientific method to support empirical, falsifiable claims. However, the cognitive science of religion is an odd science in several ways. (1) To the extent the cognitivists address an audience outside their own narrow circle, they cannot take scientific literacy or a commitment to scientific method for granted. This necessitates a certain duality in idiom and publication venues: hard-core publications appear in journals ignored by most religious studies scholars; and scientific results are softened by a more traditional humanities-based style of presentation in the more accessible venues. (2) The approach must take account of the social, cultural, and historical contexts of the empirically verifiable cognitive capacities and processes that it argues to be foundational to religion: “no sharp distinction can be drawn between cognitive and cultural input” (Pyysiäinen and Anttonen, 22). (3) Relations between theory and data are

complicated by the facts that (i) religion is a level removed from the experimentally verifiable phenomena that allegedly constitute it and (ii) these phenomena are not inherently religious: “religious concepts are *parasitic* upon intuitive understandings and inferences that would be there, religion or not” (Pyysiäinen and Anttonen, 90, original emphasis). (4) The majority of scholars working in the field are not trained scientists. (Psychologists Justin L. Barrett, University of Michigan, and Ara Norenzayan, University of British Columbia, are among the few exceptions.) (5) For these reasons and because it is young, the field still has little in the way of religion-specific experimental research to draw on, though this is changing. Scholars in the field tend to cite not perform experiments, drawing on work by cognitive psychologists with no specific interest in religion. (Two of the eleven contributions to *Current Approaches* draw on experimental studies, and one on ethnographic work, done by the authors themselves.) A related characteristic of this emerging field is the great extent to which a small numbers of scholars repeatedly cite one another’s work, recycling a relatively limited core of empirical findings and interpretive claims.

The distinction between experimental/scientific and text-based/humanistic approaches begins to blur here: most cognitive work on religion does not generate and test hypotheses; it researches texts — albeit often scientific texts — retrieving explanatory and interpretive tools and applying these to religious phenomena (e.g., what “may well be” the case with religion is “consistent with” findings from psychology [Pyysiäinen and Anttonen, 73]). Further extending this armchair scientific method, recent work (e.g., that of Jason Sloane) has begun to reinterpret historical developments in the light of cognitivist views of religion. As a result, the main results of cognitive approaches to religion to date are hypotheses, models, and “general, preliminary proposals” (McCauley and Lawson, 12) that remain to be tested. Yet the field is young, and its claims “are falsifiable in principle and are, for the most part, potentially testable in practice via replicable experiments” (Pyysiäinen and Anttonen, 149). The near future promises exciting and valuable developments in the cognitive study of religion, and these two volumes constitute respectively an ideal introduction and a major contribution to the field.

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STEVEN ENGLER

ENNIO SANZI (ed.), *I culti orientali nell'impero romano: Un'antologia di fonti* (Hierá: Collana di Studi storico-religiosi 4) — Cosenza: Edizioni Lionello Giordano 2003 (483 p.) ISBN 88-86919-14-X (pbk.) €28.41.

“Collana di Studi storico-religiosi,” edited by Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, is the name of a series of excellent contributions to the history of religions that demonstrates the continuing vitality of our discipline in Italy. Previous publications in the series include an Italian version of Michel Tardieu’s concise introduction to Manicheism, even more valuable than its French original, due to the introduction and bibliography added by Gasparro; an important collection of essays on soteriologies of the ancient world called *Destino e salvezza*; a volume on the Bektashi Sufi order by Vittoria Luisa Guidetta (*L'Islam vicino: i Bektashi*); a rich conference volume on *Themes and Problems of the History of Religions in Contemporary Europe*; and last, but not least, a new book by Giulia Gasparro herself on the “mystery religions,” called *Misteri e Teologie*.

A further addition to this commendable series is the present volume by Ennio Sanzi. It is a collection of the Greek and Latin sources, with Italian translations, for the so-called oriental cults flourishing during the Roman Empire. The choice of texts is — fortunately — not restricted to that period, however; the anthology includes testimonies starting from the Homeric hymns, Pindar, and Herodotus and continuing all the way to the end of Late Antiquity. As the title indicates, this sourcebook covers the “oriental cults,” not the so-called “mystery religions.” Therefore, the Greek mysteries are not included here, though in his introduction Sanzi does devote a few pages to Demeter and the Eleusinian mysteries — which is appropriate since narrative themes associated with the Greek goddess came to influence the female oriental deities in their Hellenistic form. What the anthology does contain is a rich collection of texts relating to not only to the best-known Oriental deities Isis, the Phrygian and Syrian varieties of the Mother Goddess, and the mysteries of Mithras, but also including the somewhat less famous deities of Sabazius, Ma-Bellona, Men, Heliogabalus, the Heliopolitan triad, and Jupiter Dolichenus. Sanzi is well versed in the sources, and the selections are competently done. (Though there is a bias in favour of the literary sources at the expense of the epigraphic material; a larger number of inscriptions would have been helpful.)

In assessing this anthology it is difficult to avoid making comparisons with another recent and important Italian publication that partly overlaps with

Sanzi's work. This is the magnificent *Le religioni dei misteri*, edited by Paolo Scarpi in the excellent series "Scrittori greci e latini" (2 vols., Fondazione Lorenzo Valla / Mondadori 2002). That collection is put together on rather more systematic principles than Sanzi's, the texts being presented under headings such as "foundation myth," "priesthood," "initiations," "eschatology," etc. There is also a rich commentary for each extract, bibliography, and separate introductions to each of the mystery cults included in the book. I must confess that I find this form of guided presentation more instructive and useful than the method chosen by Sanzi, which is simply to give the texts relating to each of the cults in chronological order, without any explanatory notes. Sanzi promises us, it must be added, a second volume, which will provide the commentary we sorely miss for the texts. I think, however, that a study tool such as this needs to be conceived from the beginning as an integral whole, where the selection of texts, the order and principles of presentation, and the commentary are designed to mutually complement one another. As it is, Sanzi gives us a large number of texts, but he offers little guidance as to what we should look for in them, how they should be interpreted, or how they have been discussed in the history of research.

The major advantages of Sanzi's anthology are on the other hand that it contains a large number of texts, and that the selections in general are quite generous — not just tiny snippets without context. In that sense it is a valuable supplement to collections such as Scarpi's, where the editor has already made the major strategic decisions on behalf of the reader as to what is important. In comparing the two works it must also be underlined once more that the subject matters overlap only partially, since Sanzi's collection includes a number of important ancient cults that are not "mystery religions," and which are not represented either in Scarpi's or in other comparable anthologies. In sum, therefore, this moderately priced volume is an excellent resource for the study of the Oriental cults under the Roman Empire. We look forward to the commentary.

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EINAR THOMASSEN

MARTIN BAUMANN, BRIGITTE LUCHESI, ANNETTE WILKE (eds.), *Tempel und Tamilen in zweier Heimat. Hindus aus Sri Lanka im deutschsprachigen und skandinavischen Raum* — Würzburg: Ergon Verlag 2003 (500 p.) ISBN 3-89913-300-5 (pbk.) €40.00.

Increasing religious pluralism in Europe is now getting attention from academic research, but still more detailed regional studies on particular migrants groups are needed. It was Martin Baumann who initiated research on the (Saiva) Hindu Tamil minority in German speaking countries in the late 1990s. Since then several small research projects have been started and some of the results are now presented in this volume, together with studies carried out in Scandinavian countries. Due to the escalating civil war in Sri Lanka, since the mid-1980s many Tamils from Sri Lanka have fled the country and taken refuge in Europe. As a result quite a number of Tamils are living now in Germany and Scandinavia. Most of them are Hindus and they have already founded numerous temples — more than twenty in Germany, nineteen in Switzerland, two in Denmark, two in Norway and one in Sweden.

This volume gives a profound introduction to the complex role that religion plays among Hindu Tamils in the context of a diasporic situation. The comprehensive introduction draws a good picture of the overall situation; the following parts then deal with different regions. Part one looks into the German situation, combined with part two that focuses on the Kamadchi temple in Hamm-Uentrop (Westphalia), the largest European Tamil temple. This is the first place of worship in Germany that was originally planned and erected as a Hindu temple; it has become an important pilgrimage site for Tamil migrants from all over Germany and abroad. Moreover, the Kamadchi temple attracted the attention of the German public and its temple festivals are regularly covered by the national press. The third part deals with the situation in Switzerland and the fourth with Scandinavia. It is a strength of the book that several contributions are not only concentrating on Hindu religion in a narrow sense but do explicitly look into the wider context, i.e. the legal and social situation of the Tamil migrants and the role of women. The latter even receives additional attention through an appendix containing the German translation of parts of a Tamil novel by Kallaru Satheesh that reflects the difficult situation of young Tamil women in traditional Hindu families in Europe. A fifth part examines the nationalist celebrations of the LTTE in Europe. An excellent index and many illustrations, among them 24 color plates, and a complete list of addresses of Tamil temples in Germany,

Switzerland and Scandinavia make this book a very good reference work on the topic. However, the quality of the contributions differs; one of the reasons for this might be that some contributors are not familiar with the complex aspects of modern Tamil culture in South Asia which should be a prerequisite before studying Tamil migrants in Europe.

Some contributions attract special attention. In an excellent and ground-breaking study on the “compression of traditions” Annette Wilke argues that the Hindu temples in Germany are a place where different modes of worship (especially brahmanical and non-brahmanical ones) are newly negotiated in the diasporic situation. She compares Sankara-traditions and Srividya in South India and temple worship in Jaffna with the results of her field work in three different Tamil temples in the German town of Hamm. As a result, she underlines the flexibility and dynamics of Tamil Saivism and shows how traditions are preserved, condensed and newly invented at the same time. The reproduction of Tamil cultural and caste identity in Germany could also mean a reformulation of religious traditions and hierarchies. Brigitte Luchesi tells us about the building process of the Kamadchi temple in Hamm in which temple architects and craftsmen from South India were involved, and she undertook the painful task to map the iconographical and architectural framework of the temple which makes her study an invaluable guide. Another important contribution comes from Peter Schalk who goes “beyond Hindu Festivals” and analyses the so-called Great Heroes’ Days organized by the LTTE in Europe where solidarity between Tamils for the armed struggle aiming at the establishment of an independent Tamil State in Sri Lanka is expressed beyond religious affiliations and within a secular framework. Schalk analyses the linguistic, cultural and religious background of this peculiar commemoration cult for the dead fighters of the LTTE and describes its transformation within the European context. Schalk’s contribution also points to the problem that the religious identity of Tamils should not be overemphasized as religion seems to be only one identity marker among many others.

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# RELIGIOUS CONVERSION, COVERT DEFIANCE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY: A COMPARATIVE VIEW

HILDA NISSIMI

## *Summary*

This article examines the special contribution of forced conversion to the formation of a new social identity. Groups that were forced to convert while struggling to maintain a former-covert religious identity, such as the Moriscos of Spain, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, and the Huguenots of France, shaped social identities with common traits, despite differences in social, political and religious environments. These groups stressed memory practices, strengthened familistic values, and re-generated social roles. Each of these practices set them apart from both of the faith communities they belonged to: the old and the new, the open and the secret. The Mashhadis of Iran are offered as a control group to test this argument, as their community is the farthest in time and space while conforming to the same pattern of social mechanisms. The evolution of the new social-cultural and even ethnic identity was a process whereby religious motifs generated cultural cohesion, and communal ties facilitated both. Thus, even when danger was over a new community was born, more self-conscious, and stronger than before.

## *Introduction*

In 1839, the Jewish settlement in Mashhad (Iran), one of Shi'ite Islam's most sacred sites, was forced to convert. Despite the danger, some of the Jews left the city soon afterwards for what seemed to them a safe haven in Herat, Afghanistan. The people left behind in Mashhad, and only those, struggled under the burden of forced conversion, while holding tenaciously on to their former faith. They thus became a community imbued with a strong communal sense, which arose out of individual efforts to retain and pass on memories of the Jewish past, replete with its own heroes. The forced conversion fostered a singular tradition, a blend of Judaism and Persian culture, inner Jewish religious truth, and external Islamic dissimulation. These cultural and religious factors led, of necessity, to marriage within the group, turning

relationships among community members into threefold ties of blood and faith and danger, ties that endure to this day.

The Mashhadi experience is far from unique. A quick glance at a few of the best-known instances of mass forced conversion brings to the fore a strong sense of *déjà vu*. The experiences of the Jews of fourteenth-century Spain, the Muslims of fifteenth-century Spain, the Jews of sixteenth-century Portugal, and the Huguenots of seventeenth-century France all resemble those of the Mashhadis of Iran despite every possible difference, including time and space.

Forced conversion is always brought about by the majority groups in order to enforce uniformity of religion, even when the perpetrators are well aware that true and full conversion cannot be achieved in a single deed or utterance of faith. For example, Philip II (1556–1598), who decreed the forced conversion of the Muslims of Granada, is quoted as having said: “[M]y wish and that of the queen is that these *moros* be baptized; if they do not become Christians, their sons or grandsons will.” It was felt, as in this case, that conversion would essentially destroy the religious barriers preventing acculturation and fusion.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, when in 1685 Louis XIV ordered the forced conversion of the French Protestants, the Huguenots, it was part of his grand scheme for the achievement of *une loi, une foi, un roi* — “one law, one faith, one king.”

The success of these forced conversions was partial at best. The Moriscos, as the ex-Muslim Moors came to be called, were described in a seventeenth-century report on Seville as being in “very great number,” and they were accused of stealing children and teaching Muslim doctrine.<sup>2</sup> A hundred years after the 1391 mass forced conversions in Spain, the Judeoconversos were still conspicuous and troubling enough

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<sup>1</sup> Miguel-Angel Ladero Quesada, “Mudéjares and Repobladores in the Kingdom of Granada (1485–1501),” in *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492*, ed. Alsia Meyuhus Ginio, London: Frank Cass 1992, 74.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Elisabeth Perry, “Behind the Veil: Moriscos and the Politics of Resistance and Survival,” in *Spanish Women in the Golden Age: Images and Realities*, eds. Magdalena S. Sánchez and Alain Saint-Saëns, Westport, CT: Greenwood 1996, 48.

for the Spanish court to expel the remainder of the Jews in the hope of finally eradicating Judaizing practices. And nearly a hundred years after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, there still were Protestants in France who were executed for allegedly hindering their offspring from embracing the Catholic religion.

Not only did forced conversion fail to erase the hated religion or bring about conformity; it seems to have achieved the very opposite. Those who did survive the double game were stronger than before. After the Portuguese New Christians encountered the terror of the Inquisition, “their crypto-Judaic practices grew more subterranean, their Judaism more fervent.”<sup>3</sup> Even Ben-Zion Netanyahu, who believes that most Judeoconvertos in Spain at the time of the establishment of the Inquisition were no longer Jews, thought that the minority who still held on “would have, in all likelihood, soon faded into nothingness, had not the process of assimilation been violently interfered with by the repellent and bewildering actions of the Inquisition; and that thus it was due to the Inquisition itself that the dying Marranism in Spain was given a new lease on life.”<sup>4</sup> The Moriscos holding out in Spain until their expulsion in 1609–1614 also constituted a particular ethnic identity.<sup>5</sup>

The effect of conversion cannot be more radically described than in the words of Joutard on the fate of the Huguenots. He starts off with the question: “The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes: End or Renewal of French Protestantism?” and even admits the question to be “paradoxical or even shocking.” He then comes to the conclusion that “[n]evertheless, it is not difficult to find historians who consider that the Protestant churches of France were moribund on the eve of the

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<sup>3</sup> Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of Sephardic Experience*, New York: The Free Press/MacMillan 1992, 143.

<sup>4</sup> B. Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain: From the Late XIVth to the Early XVIth Century According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, 2nd ed., Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co. 1973, 3.

<sup>5</sup> C.B. Stuczynski talks of an ethnic identity (“Two Minorities Facing the Iberian Inquisition,” *Hispania Judaica* 3 [2000], 140).



Edict de Fontainebleau (the act of Revocation) and that persecution, far from destroying them, saved them.”<sup>6</sup> In fact, there is evidence to show that after the Revocation their adherence to their secret faith was stronger than before: “All the children who were in their cradles at the time of the general conversions, even those who were 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, are now more Huguenot than their fathers and mothers ever were.”<sup>7</sup>

The Mashhadis are the youngest crypto-faith community. Outward Islamic conversion, along with a thriving underground communal life, lasted as long as they stayed in Mashhad, well into the 1940s. Although 1839 was about a hundred and sixty years after the Revocation and in an entirely different environment, they were described a year after their conversion in almost exactly the same words as Joutard used for describing the Huguenots: “In secret they observe the Jewish religion, and tell their children not to forget the event of Allah-Daad . . . they are now more zealous Jews in secret than ever; but call themselves, like the Jews in Spain, Anusim, ‘the compelled ones!’”<sup>8</sup>

Huguenots within France and abroad have retained a differentiated social identity traceable to our days. Likewise, the Anusim have created a diaspora with a distinct culture that in many ways retained the traits of the underground groups and communities. So far, the Mashhadis not only have kept many characteristics from the underground period but also show a vigorous cohesion in spite of their wide dispersal after 1945 to Tehran, Israel, Britain, and the United States. Their communal unity has expressed itself in concerted action several times. During the 1950s when Afghani Jews needed help on their way through Iran to Israel, the Mashhadi communities in Mashhad, Tehran, London and Israel helped.<sup>9</sup> A recent achievement was the building of

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<sup>6</sup> Philippe Joutard, “The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes,” in *International Calvinism 1541–1715*, ed. Menna Prestwich, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1985, 339.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 360.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara, in the Years 1843–1845, to Ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Connolly*, 2nd ed., London 1845, II 173, and I 241, respectively.

<sup>9</sup> Yaghoub Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad 1746–1946. From Their Entrance to Mashad at the Time of Nader Shah Afshar Until Their Migration*

a home for the elderly in Herzlia, Israel. Likewise, after an extensive fire in Israel in 1992, woodland and picnic areas were donated on behalf of the "Mashhadi Community."<sup>10</sup>

Even in outline form, the similarities are striking. Crypto-faith groups, far from each other in time and space, nonetheless conform in their basic social identity traits. These similarities have already attracted academic interest, usually between Huguenots and Judeoconverts or other pairings.<sup>11</sup> However, this article contends that some of the central traits are also common to all of these groups, constituting a durable social identity.

The article further argues that their common denominator as crypto-faith communities has been the main generator of their new identity. Every stage, from the "double game" of religious identities played by individuals to the constitution of groups dedicated to the religious survival of their members, contributed to the emergence of each new entity. The Mashhadi Jews, completely removed from the other groups by every factor but the forced conversion, show a remarkable social similarity. They are therefore offered as a kind of control group to test the validity of this argument.

### *The Emergence of Crypto-Faith*

Different explanations have been offered about the phenomenon of each of these groups in sociological terms, although none addresses the Converso experience as a paradigm. The first to attempt an explanation was Spinoza, who also thought he was providing an under-

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from *Mashad to Tehran*, in manuscript translated from Persian, private publication, pp. 88–89.

<sup>10</sup> Abdolrahim Etessami, "Our Trip to Israel," *Megillah*, no. 38 (October, 1992), 18–22.

<sup>11</sup> Herbert Lüthy, "Variations on Theme by Max Weber," in *International Calvinism* (above, n. 6), 377–78; W.P. Zenner, *Minorities in the Middle: A Cross-Cultural Analysis*, Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press 1991, 124–25; Stuczynski, "Two Minorities" (above, n. 5); Renée Levine Melammed, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel? The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999, 166–67, citing Perry, "Behind the Veil" (above, n. 2), 39–40.

standing of the difference between the Spanish and Portuguese Conversos:

That they are preserved largely through the hatred of other nations is demonstrated by historical fact. When the King of Spain formerly compelled the Jews to embrace the religion of his kingdom or else to go in exile, a considerable number of Jews accepted Catholicism. Now since all privileges of native Spaniards were granted to those who embraced their religion, and they were then considered worthy of full civic rights, they were so speedily assimilated to the Spaniards that after a short while no trace of them was left, nor any remembrance. But just the opposite fate befell those whom the King of Portugal compelled to embrace his country's religion. Although converted to this religion, they lived on their own, because the King declared them unworthy of civic rights.<sup>12</sup>

He seems to have assumed that it is entirely a reaction to persecution that kept the community going. This not only fails to take into account those who were forced to convert among the Spanish Jews, but it also does not really allow for differences *within* the Portuguese and Spanish communities.<sup>13</sup>

The Moriscos' survival is hinted at, rather than analysed, to be explained by the pariah group model.<sup>14</sup> The term was also suggested as befitting the Conversos after the *limpieza de sangre* ("blood purity") laws because of their rejection by the Catholic environment.<sup>15</sup> As Max Weber initially developed this model specifically to explain Jewish survival and economic success in the face of persecution, it might be tempting to try and apply it as a more general explanation for the Converso phenomenon:

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<sup>12</sup> Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, *Theological-Political Treatise*, [1670] Gebhardt edition 1925, Samuel Shirley (trans.), (1991) Cambridge: Hackett 1998, 47.

<sup>13</sup> Wachtel, following Yerushalmi, shows the historical basis for the Spinoza thesis in the comparative longer period and comparative greater ease of the Spanish community. However, he also points to the reductive nature of this argument for a much too complex phenomenon. Nathan Wachtel, *La Foi du Souvenir*, Paris: Seuil 2001, 16–19.

<sup>14</sup> Perry, "Behind the Veil" (above, n. 2), 50 n. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Eugene Moore, "The Catholic Jews of Spain," Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois 1973, 184.

In our usage, pariah people denotes a distinctive hereditary social group lacking autonomous political organization and characterized by prohibitions against commensalism and intermarriage originally founded upon magical, tabooistic, and ritual injunctions. Two additional traits of a pariah people are political and social disprivilege and far-reaching distinctiveness in economic functioning.<sup>16</sup>

Weber not only used the model as an explanation for Jewish survival in general without distinguishing the Conversos among them; he was aware of the general resemblance between Protestants and Jews. However, he thought it less important than the differences, which turned the Jews into a pariah group and enabled the Protestants to build the basis of modern capitalism. The pariah group model has never been applied to Protestant behaviour in general nor to crypto-Protestants in particular. And small wonder. With all the animosity among the Christian denominations, this would seem to go too far. Even after Weber, pariah groups are perceived as an extreme form of the minority position, representing “groups which are actively rejected by the host population because of behaviour or characteristics positively condemned, though often useful in some specific practical way . . . .[T]hey are often forced to make use of easily noticeable diacritica to advertise their identity.”<sup>17</sup> The problems of the Protestants had less to do with behaviour than with faith, and where they were tolerated they were definitely not pariahs; where they were not, they “did not exist,” having been ordered to abjure and convert or go into exile. When they wanted to pass into the larger society, they had no problem in doing so, after abjuring, unlike pariahs, who have a problem escaping the stigma of having dissociated from a pariah community. Thus, they had no need to fake their origin.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, trans. E. Fischhoff, Boston, MA: Beacon Press 1963, 109–10; and *Economy and Society*, eds. G. Roth and C. Wittich, New York 1968, 493, in Zenner, *Minorities* (above, n. 11), 5.

<sup>17</sup> Fredrik Barth, “Introduction,” in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth, Bergen and Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 1969, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Interconfessional marriage was not unknown in 17th century Europe, and indeed had the effect of effacing religious gaps. Louis Chatellier, *Tradition Chrétienne*

Furthermore, it is highly questionable if this concept could properly describe any of the crypto-faith groups, since they were not “tolerated” as such — if proven to be disloyal to their new faith they were asked to pay the price of their disloyalty. Although both Jews and Moors, even after converting, had problems marrying into old Spanish Christian families because of the *limpieza de sangre* laws, which specified that the offspring of such a marriage could not be eligible for any public office, some of them did marry, and none of them had any problem outside Spain and Portugal. However, even the Jews and Moors in Spain could hardly be said to be actively rejected by the host population because of behaviour or characteristics positively condemned — since there were none.<sup>19</sup> Even the Xuetas, the Judeoconvertos of Majorca, although treated as pariahs for centuries after full conversion, are not a very good example since their status was not inherent in their looks, or in occupation, or in religion, and they could have lost that status by moving to Spain.<sup>20</sup>

Sociologists have touched upon the similarity between Jews and Huguenots in trying to explain it within the framework of the economic behaviour of the middleman.<sup>21</sup> It is hard to dispute the high percentage of middlemen and even more so the bourgeois constitution of the Judeoconvertos — Judaising or not — and the same with the Huguenots. But was it cause or effect? Was there something in the anonymity of the city that allowed the double game to succeed? Was there something in the nature of merchants, their ability to read

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*et renouveau catholique dans le cadre de l'ancien diocèse de Strasbourg, 1650–1770*, Paris: Ophrys 1981, 146; Nicholas Griffiths, “The best of Both Faiths: The Boundaries of religious allegiance and Opportunism in Early Eighteenth-century Cuenca,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 77:2 (April 2000), 16.

<sup>19</sup> The Old Christian mode rather than being segregative should be seen as devising the laws as instruments to prevent the penetration of the Conversos into the elite. Thomas F. Glick, “On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity,” in *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World 1391–1648*, ed. Benjamin R. Gampel, New York: Columbia University Press 1997, 312.

<sup>20</sup> Moore, “The Catholic Jews of Spain” (above, n. 15), 203–11.

<sup>21</sup> Zenner, *Minorities* (above, n. 11), 124–25.

someone else's needs, the knowledge of other cultures and the ability to move through them — in short, the ability to be yourself while wearing a different cultural mask?<sup>22</sup> However, the theory of middlemen does not apply itself to this line of questioning. Or was it effect? Were the mental processes of individualism, and scepticism, which crypto-faith entails, the forerunners and foundation layers of the modern, ergo urban, capitalist, and perhaps even secular, mind?<sup>23</sup> Or is there perhaps a common psychological basis in a fundamental defiance among the Conversos that made them defiant not only in the religious aspect of life but also in economic and political ways?<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, these explanations are mostly unsatisfactory because they do not take into account the basic similarity of all crypto-faith groups. This resemblance cannot be disposed of as a mere coincidence, nor a matter of the number of people who stayed faithful, or the number of religious precepts they stayed faithful to. Rather it attests to a common identity of converts as a social group. Indeed, they show many traits in common with religious minorities, especially those who were underprivileged or persecuted. The difference between a persecuted religious minority and a converted community, especially one striving to stay loyal to a secret religion, is found not in the amount of persecution or danger but in the nature of both the danger and the essence of the religious loyalty. The danger may well be more latent than apparent. The bearer of the religious mask may even benefit in terms of social standing and material conditions from his

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<sup>22</sup> Rutner's occupation as a pilot is suggested as an explanation for his chameleon ability to move from one faith to another; Griffiths, "The Best of Both Faiths" (above, n. 18), 31.

<sup>23</sup> Yirmiyau Yovel, *Spinoza VeKofrim Acherim*, Tel Aviv 1988. It is a central theme of the book considering the Judeoconversos, but the description of "the mind process" also applies to Uriel Da Costa (55–59), Dr. Juan de Prado (67–78), and, of course, Spinoza himself. On the other hand Francisco Maldonado de Silva, in spite of his Spinoza-like rationalism, was deeply religious: Nathan Wachtel, "Francisco Maldonado de Silva: 'Le ciel face à face,'" *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 54:4 (July 1999), 909.

<sup>24</sup> Wachtel, *La Foi du Souvenir* (above, n. 13), 21.

conversion, although under constant threat of losing not just all that he may have gained in worldly standing and possessions, but also his worldly existence altogether.

The deepest loyalty notwithstanding, religious practices, and indeed religious faith itself, could not but change in underground life. The lack of formal religious education, the lack of knowledge as the weight of time grew heavier, and the impossibility of practicing precepts that could be detected by outsiders would in time create a growing lacuna and even distortion in the crypto-religious behaviour. The crypto-faith community would have had to dissimulate and hide religious rituals while practicing what could only have been anathema to either the secret or the open religion. The wish, even subconscious, to find what could be common to both, at the very time when one had constantly to see the difference, meant that “consciousness is a battleground upon which beliefs, disbeliefs and unbeliefs contend.” In time, these factors had to express themselves in a new symbiosis.<sup>25</sup> Exemplifying this argument is the Moslem text of a prayer in Arabic from North Africa that invokes the names of Jesus and Mary. Jesus is presented as God’s messenger and Mary is called “our lady.” God is called upon to strengthen the community of true believers for their sake.<sup>26</sup> Another example is found in the various religious constructions that Judeoconvertos articulated, including the worship of “Jewish saints” and the prayer for the souls in purgatory, among others.<sup>27</sup> Any convert group is thus alienated from co-religionists of both of the religions it practices, and both religions are rendered make-believe.

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<sup>25</sup> The description of the mind process in the case of the Judeoconvertos of Spain and Portugal, in Yovel, *Spinoza* (above, n. 23), 23–34. citation from Pruyser in Griffiths, “The Best of Both Faiths” (above, n. 18), 18.

<sup>26</sup> One explanation for the origin of the prayer as well as the cult of Mary in North Africa is Morisco immigration Ron Barkai, “Une invocation Musulmane au nom de Jésus et Marie,” *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions* 200:3 (1983), esp. 259, 264, 266–67.

<sup>27</sup> The entire book of Wachtel, *La Foi du Souvenir* (above, n. 13), is dedicated to such idiosyncratic structures. See esp. 322–33.

Even more deficient are the above theories in the explanation of the appearance of the crypto-faith communities. What decided the process that turned some individuals to the dangerous double game while others did not? What turned the few from lonely, nonintegrated persons into cohesive communities?

Was the double game ever really a matter of choice? The conversion was truly compelling when the convert could see no alternative: no geographic outlet to enable exile, nor physical disability or other personal limitation to tie the convert to his/her place. But faithfulness to the former religion might also have been compelling. Carlos Carrete Parrondo, in exploring the attitudes of simple Judeoconvertos who lived far from the cultural centres in which popular tradition prevailed, suggests that theological and philosophical subtleties do not serve. The actions of these people should be better explained as the outward expression of uncontrollable emotions. The statement of a Castilian Judeoconverso, Pedro López de Ayala, best represents the entire argument: "I'll have you know that I will never forget the milk that I suckled."<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the one who changed religion was asked to change overnight no less than all the age-old tendencies and memories that were hard to get rid of, even when one wanted to. In a more sociological vein, Kenneth Moore has also remarked that even in the case when the conversion was sincere and cultural assimilation was intended, it was hard to wean oneself abruptly from all the social ties and relationships: "As a product of a complex communal social organization, how much could the individual undo the intense socialization of his childhood?" At least at the first stage after assimilation, the converts continued consciously or unconsciously to invoke the sense of community.<sup>29</sup>

In reality, the persecuted minority reacted in one of three ways after the forced conversion: some went into exile to live their religion openly. Some indeed truly converted, and either they or their descendants went over to the majority faith. But the middle group posed the

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<sup>28</sup> Carlos Carrete Parrondo, "Nostalgia among Castilian *Judeoconvertos*," in *Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (above, n. 1), 30.

<sup>29</sup> Moore, "The Catholic Jews of Spain" (above, n. 15), 161.



greatest riddle: those who went underground, retaining different parts of their former beliefs and customs. It is naturally very hard to know what was kept by how many. Some of this group were absorbed after a time into the majority after all, but some managed to hold on for long enough to see deliverance and a return to open religious life.

Individual decisions as to which group to belong to were influenced by social factors, and the aggregate of individual decisions had social implications. What were the social factors that ensured after the Revocation that Protestants in northern France reacted so differently from those of the Midi? In his article on the French Huguenots, Philippe Joutard, following Elisabeth Labrousse, suggests the possible factors needed for a group to choose between trying to stay true to their religion at home or going into exile. In the different regions of France, emigration was influenced by general factors like the urbanism of the area, the occupation of the emigrants, and so forth. The South was less affected by emigration because the Huguenots of the Midi still felt themselves strong and believed that they could engage in a trial of strength, whereas in the North, the Protestants were well aware that they were a minority and could not imagine any sort of collective resistance.<sup>30</sup>

It wasn't simply a question of numbers but of self-assurance. So it was that the presence of Protestants in New France persisted in spite of pressures to convert and the lack of a recognised community, until relief came in the 1760s in the form of the British conquest of Québec. But their economic worth and the important role they played in laying commercial foundations ensured limited toleration and continued existence. Small numbers notwithstanding, they married among themselves, some after abjuring and then concealing their Protestant beliefs, some abjuring only to have their sons baptised.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Joutard, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes" (above, n. 6), 347–48.

<sup>31</sup> Cornelious J. Jaenen, "The Persistence of the Protestant Presence in New France, 1541–1760," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, 1974, 36.

Similarly, the Moriscos in Spain who remained in the North lived among dispersed families, usually in smaller communities where they assimilated more readily into Christian culture, eventually forgetting their own Arabic dialects. Muslims in the East, in the kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia, clustered together in higher-density rural communities where they retained their Arabic dialects and customs. In the South, Muslims lived in especially high concentrations in urban centres, such as Córdoba, Seville, and Granada. The latter two groups were willing to test their strength against the persecuting majority when they felt their religious existence threatened beyond endurance.<sup>32</sup>

Spanish Jewry provides the best example of the multiple choices faced, because for a while, individuals who made different choices there lived side by side, even in the Spanish court itself. For an entire century (1391–1492), faithful Jews had remained a recognisable community, even though severely weakened. They co-existed alongside large numbers in Spain who had converted to Christianity, of whom many continued to keep a tenacious hold on their Jewish origin, a hold the Inquisition monitored jealously. Even the Decree of Expulsion itself in 1492 was more of an invitation to convert and stay, and so each individual who went into exile or decided to remain exercised such a choice.<sup>33</sup> The Portuguese Jews ostensibly did not face the same choice as they were all baptised en masse in one instance (1496). However, it still remained a matter of individual choice to become a crypto-Jew or a true Christian, to go into exile and return to open Judaism or to stay. Most converts remained in Portugal, although they were the same people who had opted for exile earlier when posed with the same alternative in Spain.<sup>34</sup>

The different fate of the Judeoconverts of Spain and Portugal confirms the importance of a self-assured community for the endurance

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<sup>32</sup> Perry, “Behind the Veil” (above, n. 2), 39–40.

<sup>33</sup> Gerber, *The Jews of Spain* (above, n. 3), xvi–xxii, 116–129.

<sup>34</sup> Even when the laws forbade leaving the Iberian Peninsula, ways could always be found. It was a personal choice at least by default. Yovel, *Spinoza* (above, n. 23), 28–29.

of a crypto-faith. The longer endurance of the Portuguese Conversos proves the point. Because the community structure had already broken down for the Spanish Conversos prior to the imposition of the Inquisition, the additional blows atomised it. In comparison, the Portuguese Conversos, whose community was forced into conversion in its entirety, had their community ties converted as well. Within the community context, their secret identity was easier to uphold.<sup>35</sup>

Like the Portuguese, the Mashhadi community was transformed in a day. No one was left outside to point fingers at them or to cast doubt upon their (secret) Jewish identity. On the contrary, there were group pressures to maintain crypto-Judaism. Indeed, unlike the Portuguese Conversos, they had frequent intercourse with Jews. These contacts reinforced their knowledge of Judaism and helped them persevere.<sup>36</sup>

Like other converts, the Mashhadi community formed into the same three groups: those who left, those who adjusted to Islam, and those who became crypto-Jews. It is hard to ascertain how many religious practices (of either religion) were performed, and by how many.<sup>37</sup> Because they escaped the terrors of an organised inquisition, the Mashhadis were also deprived of contemporary documentation. What little we know comes from travellers who recorded what they saw, but mostly from what they were shown and told by the community, some of it folklore and memories.

One of the grimmest accounts comes to us from a young Jewish traveller, Ephrayim Nymark, who visited Mashhad in 1883/4. After having gained the community's confidence, he was able to claim that thirty years after the conversion, most of those who remained in Mashhad had forgotten nearly all their former religious ways.

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<sup>35</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto. Isaac Cardoso: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics*, (1971) Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press 1981, 3–8.

<sup>36</sup> Z. Fishel, "Kehilat HaAnusim BeParas," *Zion* 1:1 (1937), 74. Even the Portuguese Marranos had some contacts with Jews on their travels, and benefited from them: Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (preceding n.), 35–36.

<sup>37</sup> As Yerushalmi noted in his *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (23, 32), one of the most impressive works of imaginative reconstruction of Marrano life.

Only very few remained faithful until the 1870s when a sudden, unexplained religious revitalisation came over the community.<sup>38</sup> Other accounts give a picture that conforms more closely to that of analogous converted communities. They hold that the assimilationists constituted only a fraction in the community.<sup>39</sup> Those who embarked on the double game did their best to keep the laws of Jewish family ritual: “cleanliness,” dietary rules, and the major holidays. They had 3 or 4 hidden prayer places where 30 to 60 people (out of a community of some 600 men) went on Shabbat and holidays.<sup>40</sup>

The Jewish identity of the community was unchallenged at the time. The best authority on that point was Mullah Garji (HaRav Matitya Garji), born in 1846 to Mashhadi parents, who left Mashhad after the forced conversion and was the religious leader in Herat.<sup>41</sup> He was a Halakhic scholar and an outsider, but nonetheless acquainted with the community’s circumstances. Mullah Garji may have been influenced by the more lenient attitudes towards the Spanish Conversos, while also aware of the difficulty of getting out, having tasted at first hand the Iranian attitude towards Jews who had fled Mashhad. No less important must have been his knowledge of the ostensible faithfulness of the community to Jewish practices. As a resident in Herat, he surely knew

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<sup>38</sup> E. Nymark, *Masa beErez Hakedem, Suria, Kurdistan, Aram Naharaim, Paras VeAsia HaMerkazit*, introduced and ed. A. Ya’ari, Jerusalem 1947, 91; R. Patai, *Jadid al-Islam: The Jewish “New Muslims” of Meshhed*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press 1997, 205; Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad* (above, n. 9), 19–33, 42, 46.

<sup>39</sup> To the point that they were regarded as a faction unto themselves. The main source for this perception: Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad*, 56–58.

<sup>40</sup> Dilmani, cited in Ben-Zion Yehoshua Raz, *MiNidkhei Yisrael BeAfghanistan LeAnusei Mashhad*, Jerusalem 1992, 116–17. Ferrier estimated the number of Jews in Mashhad after the conversion at 600: J.P. Ferrier, *Caravan Journey and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Beloochistan, with Historical Notices of the Countries lying between Russia and Persia*, (1857) London 1971, 121; partial confirmation from earlier sources: Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara* (above, n. 8), II 173; Yisrael Ben Yossef Binyamin (Binyamin II), *Sefer Masey Yisrael* (Hebrew translation by David Gardin), Bialystok 1859, 87.

<sup>41</sup> Rabbi Mattityahu Garji, *Oneg Shabbat*, Jerusalem 1913.

in greater detail what a foreign traveller found out: “[T]hough their departure from that city [Mashhad] is forbidden, and they are mulcted in very heavy fines if they are caught absconding, they nevertheless continually make the attempt, and arrive at Herat.”<sup>42</sup> Still, like other converted communities, they did not entirely escape doubts about their religious sincerity.

In the Mashhadi community, self-assurance was something that a stranger, in a slightly anti-Semitic tone, found commendable: “The Jews of this town appeared in every way superior to those generally met with in Asia. They have not, perhaps, the same astuteness, but they have not the same servile air. They are ready to be of service, polite, and certainly more loyal than what one generally expects, or, indeed, sometimes finds in persons of that nation.”<sup>43</sup> Their affluence and commercial prowess must have been an important factor.<sup>44</sup>

For all of these new social entities, the first drive came from the pressure for enhanced conformity. It was endorsed by social objective conditions, such as the density of the minority population, and by their social standing and occupation. All these circumstances formed the background for individual decisions. Danger only intensified the individuality of these choices. Only a person in his heart of hearts could know which religion was true and which a game, or how much of each was make-believe.

### *Communities of Memory-Faith*

Just as different social circumstances shaped different choices, so too did they affect the double game after it was chosen. The different reaction of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews to forced conversion is well known. Whereas the former nearly disappeared a few decades after the decree of the Inquisition, the latter held for centuries.<sup>45</sup> What then accounts for the different outcome for the various converts and

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<sup>42</sup> Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys*, 433.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 122.

<sup>45</sup> Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (above, n. 35), 3–8.

their communities? What were the social factors that determined one outcome and not the other?

Joutard outlines the factors that led the underground Huguenot families into a strengthened communal union:

The minority which survived the reign of Louis XIV was smaller than it had been at the time of the Edict of Nantes, but it had been tempered by war. It had endowed itself with arms to maintain itself as a minority, and had acquired a folk-memory. Henceforth there should be no more yielding, for this would be a breach of faith with family traditions and the “founding father.” A mixed marriage became a betrayal.<sup>46</sup>

His words are echoed by Nathan Wachtel, speaking of the Judeo-conversos, the Nação, linking memory, faith and community in the explanation. Veneration of ancestors and communal martyrs brought about a union of blood and faith, cemented by endogamy.<sup>47</sup>

The obligation of memory — associated in Iberian sentiment with the pride of blood and of origin — presupposes retaining the memory of ancestors who have inculcated that truth, and of the martyrs who have suffered for it: ultimately, it is based on the consciousness of a collective history and of a community of [common] destiny . . . the identity of the men of the “Nation” is defined [by], . . . [and] carries . . . a composite and positive fundamental element of loyalty to ancestors. Because there is no doubt, that in spite of all their divergence, the members of the “Nation” partook of one common faith: the faith of memory.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, the three most prominent common characteristics of all memory-faith communities are familistic values, regendering of social roles; and the transformation of the religious practices into a culture of memory. These characteristics proved to be the cornerstones of the communities under discussion.

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<sup>46</sup> Joutard, “The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes” (above, n. 6), 367–68.

<sup>47</sup> Wachtel, *La Foi du Souvenir* (above, n. 13), 321, 328.

<sup>48</sup> “Le devoir de mémoire, associé au sentiment ibérique de la fierté du sang et de l’origine, suppose que soit entretenu le souvenir des ancêtres qui ont inculqué cette vérité, et des martyrs qui on témoigné pour elle: il se fonde, en définitive, sur la conscience d’une histoire collective et d’une communauté de destin. . . l’identité des “gens de la Nation” se définit, . . . comporte . . . une composante fondamentale, et positive, de fidélité aux ancêtres. Car les membres de la “Nation” partagent bien, au-delà de leur diversité, une foi commune: la foi du souvenir.” Ibid. 29.

### Familistic Values

Intragroup marriages, in effect turning the entire group into a familial community, is the characteristic of all religious communities. Furthermore, as minorities, they would prefer family members first and then their co-religionists in social and economic interactions.<sup>49</sup> Research also reinforces this common trait among the early modern elite families. Even Jewish converts in modern times tended to marry into other Jewish convert groups, mostly because of the reluctance of their new co-religionists.<sup>50</sup> However, it is a most notable characteristic of the crypto-faith communities.

Forced converts tend toward endogamy within their sub-group. The forced conversion unsettled traditional forms of communal identity and genealogy became a primary form of communal memory. This memory in turn gave rise to new forms of historical consciousness and historical writing.<sup>51</sup>

The forced converts were reluctant to marry their new co-religionists because of their wish to continue the faith covertly at home. In describing the marital customs and habits of the Lacger family in Castres in the 16th and 17th centuries, Raymond Menzer nicely summarises the importance of endogamy for the secret convert community from a positive point of view:

Marriage was a means to increase religious solidarity and thereby preserve the values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices shared by the Reformed community. These families formed a relatively small and closely integrated group. Through the mutual exchange of children in marriage, they forged a tight protective

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<sup>49</sup> Zenner, *Minorities* (above, n. 11), 124–25.

<sup>50</sup> T.M. Edelman, “Memories of Jewishness,” *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, eds. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and David N. Myers, Hanover, MA: Brandeis University Press 1998, 312–17, dealing with Jewish converts in France and Germany marrying within the converts circle because marrying in the wider society usually entailed marrying into a lower social status.

<sup>51</sup> D. Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jew and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” *Past and Present* 174 (Feb. 2002), 7.

network among themselves. Marriage and the accompanying economic, social, and political considerations meant the continuation and hopefully, the prosperity of the lineage.<sup>52</sup>

In time, as they shared similar social experiences and practiced similar social rules, it became a matter of convenience to continue marrying within the group and keep themselves separate from those of their former co-religionists who might not have been aware of their secret adherence to the “true” faith. Exposure could also have endangered the new converts within the majority community that had pressed for the conversion in the first place.

The Judeoconvertos, even those who were not Judaizing, were used to endogamy, and even those who retained their new religion seemed to form a caste, imbued with communal consciousness and a collective life instinct. Even if these terms are to be rejected as far-fetched, endogamy among Conversos was an accepted fact, consolidating a brotherhood of believers in a conspiracy of suffering.<sup>53</sup> Yirmiyahu Yovel, in his book on Spinoza, describing the Converso ambience, refers continually to the (Judaizing) Conversos as a fraternity of danger, likening the contacts within it to that of an underground movement.<sup>54</sup> One common characteristic of the remnants of Converso communities, well into the twentieth century, was the existence of a circle of endogamous families. They tended to see the world as divided

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<sup>52</sup> Raymond A. Mentzer, *Blood and Belief: Family Survival and Confessional Identity among Provincial Huguenot Nobility*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press 1994, 103.

<sup>53</sup> Gerber, *The Jews of Spain* (above, n. 3), 143. Scholarly literature is mostly divided between those who point out that the Jews invented the idea of “the exclusionary logic of lineage” and later the Spaniards turned it against them, whereas others argue that these ideas were invented by the Iberian Christians and adopted later by their victims. However, an argument regarding emphasis on lineage as “a newly meaningful way of thinking about religious identity” is forwarded by David Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion” (above, n. 51), 6.

<sup>54</sup> Americo Castro in Yovel, *Spinoza* (above, n. 23), 492–93, Yovel refers to endogamy (102), and to an underground movement (for instance, 70, 74ff.).



between “us” and “the others,” even when they did not transmit an expressed “Jewish” or “New Christian” identity.<sup>55</sup>

The importance of endogamy can best be exemplified by the Moriscos in Spain. After the Alpujarras rebellion in 1570, the habit of polygamy, which had been disappearing, returned as a strategy for taking care of a population that had become predominantly female. Some Moriscos of Valencia began purchasing Moriscas from Granada as wives, even if many had already married.<sup>56</sup> The Moriscos successfully held out as long as those characteristics held true. In the Canaries, the Moriscos, whether converted or not, kept Islamic religious practices, although persecuted by the Inquisition for doing so. However, all traces of their identity vanished as they fused with the islanders.<sup>57</sup>

Endogamy might have been a natural outcome of ethnic separatism, as Patai presents the case of the converted Mashhadi Jews in Iranian society.<sup>58</sup> This explanation ignores the hostility of the Moslem environment toward the separateness of the “converted” community. However it was this hostility that reinforced the separateness, even if conversion was a real option for individuals.<sup>59</sup>

Whether it was the closed doors of the general society, a matter of choice, or a combination of both, endogamy resulted in fostering a social identity. Religious faithfulness and familial loyalty became one, “a symbiosis of blood and belief,” as one researcher called it.<sup>60</sup> The symbiosis fortified blood ties with the bond of common belief, but it also transformed a religious connection into blood ties, uniting

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<sup>55</sup> Wachtel, *La Foi du Souvenir* (above, n. 13), 341–42.

<sup>56</sup> Perry, “Behind the Veil” (above, n. 2), 45.

<sup>57</sup> Jose Abu-Tarbush, “The Presence of Islam in the Canaries: A Historical Overview,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 21:1 (2001), 80; R. Carraso, “Morisques et Inquisition dans les Iles Canaries,” *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 202:4 (1985), 382.

<sup>58</sup> Patai, *Jadid al-Islam* (above, n. 38), 64.

<sup>59</sup> Before that they were Yazdees, Qazweens, etc. A quotation about the Yazdees in J. Wolff, *Researches and Missionary Labours among the Jews, Mohammedans, and other Sects*, London 1835, 135, 162.

<sup>60</sup> Mentzer, *Blood and Belief* (above, n. 52), 193.

the community across socio-economic barriers. Oppression fostered an extraordinary cohesiveness among covert coreligionists.<sup>61</sup> It has been shown that among the Huguenots, resistance became essentially a family tradition. An example of one single family in Castres shows its members actively organising resistance, whether by composing prayers or sermons, taking part in the Camisard uprising, or organising clandestine gatherings.<sup>62</sup>

Preserving the memory of one's ancestors is therefore part and parcel of remaining faithful to the covert religion. Genealogical preoccupation is thus a common feature among such groups. The French Law of Nationality relating to returning Huguenots seems to have put the stamp of formal recognition on the practice. Under Article 22 of the decree of 9/10 December 1790, any descendants of any French national who had gone into exile because of religious persecution were declared to be natural Frenchmen. Under the decree, refugees from the beginning of the Wars of Religion (1562–1598) to the years immediately preceding the Revolution were eligible for reintegration. The number of applicants was high and stayed so even after the nationality law was revised in 1886 with the article retained in a somewhat restricted form, requiring a personal decree for each case. As late as 1927, the law still recognised the existence of the descendants of families who went into exile after the revocation.<sup>63</sup> Only the Code of 1945 abrogated the article, although in reality, there still existed many Huguenots with persistent attachment to the land of their by-then remote ancestors. This could have been possible only because of a careful memorisation of ancestry as well as land of origin.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> In the case of petty Protestant nobility it can be seen in the tendency to “acquire” god-parents from lower classes among their servants. Mentzer, *Blood and Belief*, 178.

<sup>62</sup> Joutard, “The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes” (above, n. 6), 368.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in Guy Picarda, “The Evolution of the French Law of Nationality Relating to Returning Huguenots,” *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, 22:5 (1975), 451.

<sup>64</sup> Cited in Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys* (above, n. 40), 451.

Even within this context, the profuseness of the memory of family descent in the Mashhadi community is an outstanding example. At least 6 of the 12 families that had originally immigrated to Mashhad from Qazvin have detailed family trees from the time of the conversion to this day, namely, the Aminoffs, Bassalis, Dilmanis, Hakimis, Levys, and Nissimis.<sup>65</sup> This exceptional commemoration of family ties can be explained only in view of what must have been a constant worry by people dedicated to preserving the exclusivity of marital ties within the fold of the Jewish religion. This anxiety tells more about those who worried than about any real danger. Indeed, few Moslems would have asked for the hand of a Jewish girl in marriage. In their particular condition, it was enough that danger was ever present for them to find a means of preventing it from happening.<sup>66</sup>

Although endogamy is a Jewish general trait, the exceptionality of the Mashhadi behaviour is best manifested in comparison with another community that was forced to undergo conversion at the same time—the Jewish community of Shiraz. The latter soon returned to open Judaism but were under continuous persecution. The result was that they could rarely name their grandparents, or identify forebears of their patriline more than two generations removed.<sup>67</sup>

Familistic values were an important building block of the underground communities, providing a cohesion that easily continued after the double game could be relinquished. The ex-Judeoconvertos and the Huguenots formed strong, economically successful communities of middlemen, whose familistic values were part of that success. For

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<sup>65</sup> Four out of those were presented in the Community's exhibition. See *Congregation Shaare Tova "Youth Committee" Newsletter* (October 1983) p. 6. Watching my husband, Reuven Nissimi, grandson of Rabi Levi Nissimi, compile the extensive genealogical list of his family provided the impetus for my interest in the Mashhadi community and crypto-faith communities in general.

<sup>66</sup> Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad* (above, n. 9), 30, 56.

<sup>67</sup> Laurence D. Loeb, "Dhimmi Status and Jewish Roles on Iranian Society," in *Jews among Muslims: The Anthropology of Communities in the Pre-Colonial Middle East*, eds. Shlomo Deshen and Walter Zenner, London: MacMillan 1996, 254.

the Huguenots, the religious issue reinforced endogamy, which eventually produced a solid phalanx of aunts, uncles, cousins, and godparents. Even in the Huguenot Lacger family in Castres, relationships initiated by marriage as early as the seventeenth century have been rekindled more than once, and the Lacger still maintain close ties with their “nieces and nephews” and “cousins and godchildren.”<sup>68</sup>

The Sephardic community of Amsterdam, exiles from Spain went so far as to forbid intermarriage on pain of expulsion from the group.<sup>69</sup> Yoseph Kaplan argues that this self-segregation originated in Spanish Catholicism, but he also recognises it as a means of preservation of their cultural boundaries, including their perception of their self-constituted nobility.<sup>70</sup> The most significant fact of their intramarriage should be noted: they did not check the Jewish origin of a party to marriage by the Halakhic laws. Instead, they relied upon genealogies, preferring secret fidelity as a final test.<sup>71</sup>

The Mashhadis to this day form communities in which endogamy is still strong and social integration and organisation are flourishing. Their familistic ties held even after they left Mashhad in the late 1940s and became widely dispersed. Already in 1946 an onlooker was so impressed by the close contacts among the different communities in Palestine, London, New York and Iran that he saw them as “colonies” of the original.<sup>72</sup>

Were the familistic habits the ultimate factor in building these communities? In the case of the Judeoconvertos, the very opposite has been suggested. The double game allegedly created a mind process that enforced a tendency toward religious reformism, mysticism, and/or scep-

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<sup>68</sup> Raymond A. Mentzer, *Blood and Belief* (above, n. 52), 86–87.

<sup>69</sup> Glick, “On Converso and Marrano Ethnicity” (above, n. 19), 74–75.

<sup>70</sup> Yosef Kaplan, “Self-Definition of Sephardic Jews of Western Europe and Their Relation to the Alien and the Strange,” in *Crisis and Creativity* (above, n. 19), 125, 140–44.

<sup>71</sup> Wachtel, *La Foi du Souvenir* (above, n. 13), 27–28.

<sup>72</sup> Report by commission made up of Yoseph Kleinbaum and his wife representing the Jewish Agency, and A. Landstein of the central office of the Jewish National Fund, 24 May 1946, S6/4576 Central Zionist Archive.

ticism. The result of this should be individualism. This would seem contradictory to the process outlined here so far. However, the individualism so often described as proof was a matter of only a few outstanding individuals.<sup>73</sup> The possibility of a wish for conformity, even greater than among co-religionists, was no less a possible outcome.

### Regendering of Social Roles

In each underground community women undertook an enhanced role, which was expressed in various forms. Foremost, the women were reported to have shown greater loyalty to their original faith, but they also took on new roles of leadership and influence.

The women in each of the groups under discussion held out longer than the men before converting. Some of the clergy considered the Morisco women to be particularly "obstinate" in holding onto their Muslim practices and their greatest rivals for the souls of the children, who were prevented from going to Christian schools.<sup>74</sup> In a study of religious schism among Protestant families in northern France during the sixteenth century, Barbara Difendorf has found that more women than men stayed faithful to their Reformed faith. Even in a village that took its time in converting from Protestant to Catholic, and even then only outwardly as its prominence in the Camisard Rebellion shows, the men were three times more eager to convert than the women.<sup>75</sup> The presence of women in the Huguenot assemblies *au désert* (as the underground period was called) was also high.<sup>76</sup>

Women are particularly noteworthy for the part they played in the education and dissemination of their original faith. The Jews and Moors in Spain and Portugal, the Huguenots in France, and even

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<sup>73</sup> Yovel, *Spinoza* (above, n. 23), 77. However it is a central theme of the book to describe the mental processes leading to Spinoza's and other outstanding individuals' rejection of the orthodox religion and even the double life of a Marrano. A similar argument is made in Wachtel, *La Foi du Souvenir*, 323–24.

<sup>74</sup> Perry, "Behind the Veil" (above, n. 2), 40.

<sup>75</sup> Mentzer, *Blood and Belief* (above, n. 52), 170; Joutard, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes" (above, n. 6), 343.

<sup>76</sup> Joutard, 362.

the Mashhadi Jews in Iran were living in a pre- or early modern society where most of the education was expected to be conducted at home. Educating the young was therefore considered a woman's role. However, in an undercover religion, such education was not and could not be reinforced by the surrounding society or by any educational institution provided by the religious community. Quite to the contrary, they had to participate in religious schooling diametrically opposed to the home practices, which under these circumstances took on enhanced importance.

In addition to educating their offspring, women took care to ensure that their daughters-in-law were knowledgeable enough to carry on the work into the next generation. Thus, they took over at least some of the teaching offices usually identified with the male religious leader/teacher of a "normal" community. In 1686, for example, the Périgord region had a woman as preacher — "Montjoie," as she was called — who had never abjured and who organised services for two years until her arrest in April 1688. Even more notable was a young illiterate shepherdess of fifteen, Isabeau Vincent, who on 3 February 1688, in Saou, a little village of the Dauphiné southeast of Valence, began to sing psalms and to preach in her sleep. She attacked "popery," and announced that deliverance was coming. She attracted a following that piously collected her sayings, some of which were printed. She continued to prophesy until 8 June, when she was arrested. Other young men and women who had been in contact with her in turn became "inspired" and roamed all over the Dauphiné.<sup>77</sup>

In essence, these women were adopting to some extent the role of priestess — even in societies hostile to female leadership. In the ex-Muslim community in Spain, Christians complained that Moriscos held onto the Arabic language more tenaciously than the men did, and they declared that these women showed little remorse when the Inquisition punished them. Some even thought it an honour.<sup>78</sup> Inquisitors repeatedly heard in the confessional that Moriscos had

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 363.

<sup>78</sup> Perry, "Behind the Veil" (above, n. 2), 47.

learned the rites and beliefs of Islam from their womenfolk. It is not clear that Moriscos actually played a major role in teaching Islam to others; it may be that they took responsibility for teaching Islam in order to protect their men. However, after the expulsion in 1609 of all *alfaquíes*, the male Islamic religious leaders, it is likely that women did step in to fill the void.<sup>79</sup>

The Spanish and Portuguese Jewish women converts played a central part in the transmission and enhancement of Jewish rites in their homes. In the village of Belmonte, where remnants of Portuguese Conversos were found well into the 20th century, it was the women who could recite the prayers by heart, and it is they who kept alive and nourished the religion of the community.<sup>80</sup> The centrality of women in transmitting Jewish rites, especially of the Sabbath and main holidays, the dietary laws, and the purity rituals, is apparent even from Inquisition files of the 15th and 16th centuries. They continued such transmission by creating role models, by teaching, and by outright command, even if it was not always fully explained to children before the age of 9 or so.<sup>81</sup> Janet Liebman Jacobs and others have also found evidence of the prominent role played by the descendants of Converso women in the transmission of the tradition in the American Southwest.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 44.

<sup>80</sup> The unique community was rediscovered by Samuel Schwartz in 1917 who published his account. Bringing the story more up to date: David Augusto Canelo, *The Last Crypto-Jews of Portugal*, translated into English (1985) 1990, 67.

<sup>81</sup> Renée C. Levine, "Women in Spanish Crypto-Judaism, 1492–1520," unpublished Ph.D., Brandeis University 1983, especially 235–77, 338. The same author also cites a remarkable similarity in the role of Moorish/Muslim women in the preservation of their sub-culture and religion: Melammed, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel?* (above, n. 11), 166–67, citing Perry, "Behind the Veil," 37–53.

<sup>82</sup> J.L. Jacobs, "Women, Ritual and Secrecy: The creation of Crypto-Jewish Culture," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35 (1996), 97–109; Seth Ward, "Converso Descendants in the American Southwest: A Report on Research, Resources, and the Changing Search for Identity," in *Proceedings of the 1998 Conference of the European Association for Jewish Studies*, ed. Angel Saenz-Badillos, Leiden: Brill 1999, 677–86; <http://www.du.edu/~sward/cryptojews.html>.

To this day, the central part played by the Mashhadi women in the preservation of Judaism is acknowledged. It was the women who knew and followed the dietary rules for cleansing meat, including the removal of blood and the sciatic nerve, which is otherwise not considered woman's work. Stories tell of the important role women played in the rejuvenation of the community after the first shock of conversion, and of their ability to use a "woman's way" of cajoling and nudging the husbands back into the fold, or convincing them to stay within it.<sup>83</sup>

Like their forerunners in Spain and Portugal, the Mashhadi women played a particularly prominent part in the informal education and transmission of Jewishness during the first and hardest period after conversion. In his memoirs, Farrajullah Nasrullayoff Livian (1874–1951), who emigrated to Palestine and became leader of the Mashhadi community in Jerusalem, claims that Jewish education was nonexistent in the years prior to the 1880s. However, his tale of his own adherence to Jewish dietary laws defeats this assertion: as a child of 12 or 13, he tried to influence others, older than he, to observe the Sabbath. This can hardly be attributed to his Maktab (religious school), or to his six months with Mullah Abba. But it can be attributed to his mother, who was born after the conversion and brought up during the hardest years.<sup>84</sup> Her joyful reaction to his wish to study Judaism is quite telling.

The enhanced religious role of women in crypto-faith societies has practical explanations. The fact that exile was harder for women meant that a larger number of the most determined women were among those who were left behind. On the other hand, the gendered view of society accorded less importance to women and allowed them greater leniency before the law, thus making loyalty less dangerous. It must have seemed that way, at least for the Huguenots. Despite the frequent

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<sup>83</sup> Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad* (above, n. 9), 10, 26, 47. Editorial, *Megillah*, no. 28 (June 1989) 42. See also: Patai, *Jadid al-Islam* (above, n. 38), 198, 208–9, 276.

<sup>84</sup> The account of Farrajullah Nasrullayoff Livian (1874–1951), in Patai, *Jadid al-Islam*, 118–19, 120–21, 122–23.



presence of women in the Camisard Rebellion, when up to 1700 were sent to the galleys, there were only five women among the seventy executions.<sup>85</sup> Men were expected to fill public offices and to bequest their possessions, in general having a harder time evading the public arena and hiding from it.

The accepted gendered distribution of social roles that relegated the woman to the home, the only sphere where any chance of upholding the faith existed, and to the rearing of children, the bearers of the faith into the next generation, practically turned the women into the keepers of the faith. The very nature of their inferior social role, the fact that the house was considered their domain, gave them some defence there. But whenever the prominence of women's roles became apparent, they lost that defence and became prominent among those prosecuted for disloyalty to the new faith. At the same time, they gained respect and through it influence.

Their central role was also the outcome of the redefinition of the power relationship in the converted communities. In the void created wherever the established leadership had to or chose to go into exile, and in an environment where loyalty to faith defined hierarchy to some extent, the women could for once benefit from their inferior social position.

The appearance of women mystics among the Huguenots *au désert*, as well as the objection to it from the outside society, is an interesting example. Considering that acceptance of mysticism is a manner of power definition within a certain society, the acceptance of these women mystics was a fine expression of the reshaping of the power relationship, if only temporarily, within that community. The same phenomenon appeared among non-orthodox Christian groups, which accorded a larger and sometimes prominent role to women.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Joutard, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes" (above, n. 6), 364.

<sup>86</sup> Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1995, 12–18, 242–64.

Women mystics — prophetesses — appeared among the Judeoconverts in Spain as well.<sup>87</sup>

In the void created by the disappearance of the established leadership, the lesser emphasis put on learning also facilitated the enhanced role of women. The mystical role for women among the Huguenots and Judeoconverts called for charismatic leadership on the part of the prophetesses and psychological distress on the part of their listeners, not profound religious knowledge on either part. Nor was great learning called for in the case of passive loyalty or in the stubborn influence of women on their male partners to uphold the religion or return to it later. Some of their roles required knowledge — circumcision by Moriscos, for example — but it was knowledge of a technical kind. Among the Judeoconverts, the need for new prayers again allowed women equal opportunity, as erudition was not the basis for their creation. On the contrary, the traditionally gendered role of woman as educator of the young ensured that they would be able to transfer the expressions of the heart into those prayers.

It may be that remembrance of their role fulfills a social function. Remembering the part in retrospect plays a double part in the community's life in the present. The women are part of a community's heroic past, which makes that past all the more heroic and inspirational. The fact that they did their part without really stepping out of their traditional domain would seem to reinforce the gendered view of their society. It is no coincidence that women's historic role was brought to the fore in the American Mashhadi community at the very time that some of them were requesting a direct voice in their synagogue and through it their community organisation.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> For instance: Haim Beinart, "Anusei Chillon VeCiruela, VeHaneviot Mari Gomes VeInes Bay Juan Esteban," *Zion* 48:3 (1983), 241–47; id., "Tenuat HaNevia Ines, Be Puebla de Alcocer uve Talarrubias," *Tarbiz* 51:4 (1982), 642.

<sup>88</sup> Behrouz Dilmanian, "A Fruit-rich Branch Bows Down," *Megillah*, no. 46 (October 1994), 2.

### A Culture of Memory

According to some theories of collective memory, the process of remembering is completely removed from the individual sphere and projected into the public arena. Paul Connerton, following Halbwachs' approach, asserts that when we remember anything, have memories evoked within us, it is because "the same group is interested in those memories, and is able to evoke them, that they are assembled in our minds."<sup>89</sup> Conversely, what social groups choose not to retain in their common memory also defines them.<sup>90</sup>

Religion is an important factor in the determination of ethnicity. Adrian Hastings argues that, "religion is an integral element of many cultures, most ethnicities and some states."<sup>91</sup> That is partly so because it involves collective, social memory. In particular, the religious practices of Judaism and Christianity can be seen as commemorations of sacred history since they ground their collective memory in a book representing their history.<sup>92</sup> This argument is doubly true in environments that are not fully modernised, not yet secularised, and where national

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<sup>89</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1989, 37.

<sup>90</sup> Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, ed. Thomas Butler, Oxford: Blackwell 1989, 95–99; Jacques Ehrenfreund, "Mémoire et intégration: conscience historique et rapport au passé des Juifs berlinois sous le second Reich," Ph.D., Hebrew University Jerusalem 1997. It is the theme of the thesis, in particular 238–45.

<sup>91</sup> Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1997, 4; Anthony D. Smith, "Nationalism and Historians," in *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (International studies in Sociology and Social Anthropology 60), Leiden: Brill 1992, 74, citing John Armstrong's study of medieval Christian and Islamic ethnic identities regarding myth, symbol, and historical memory; id., "The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?" in *Reimagining the Nation*, eds. Marjorie Ringrose and Adam J. Lerner, Buckingham: Open University Press 1993, 22.

<sup>92</sup> Lucette Valensi, "From Sacred History to Historical Memory and Back: The Jewish Past," *History and Anthropology* 2 (1986) [= *Between Memory and History*, eds. M.N. Bourguet, L. Valensi, N. Wachtel, Chur: Harwood 1990] 284–85.

identity is yet to crystallise in full. In such a context any social identity will be more dependent on the religious component.

However, an approach to the Jewish religion that focuses on the transmission of communal memory is not universally accepted. Some would stress that it is the pressure of modernity that caused secularisation and only then was there a turn to history as an important component of their social and national identity.<sup>93</sup> In this case, only attitudes that give the Jewish tradition an exclusively historical meaning can be construed as acts of memory. This is to forgo the historical concreteness and historical re-enactments with which the Jewish holidays are so imbued.<sup>94</sup> Stephen Jay Gould underscores the necessity of a concept of Time that includes both linear and cyclical elements. The liturgical cycle was important because it provided a focus and carried a special mnemonic link-chain.<sup>95</sup>

However, religious faithfulness acts even more directly to define a group by creating a sub-culture that demarcates it. A group's idiosyncratic choice of religious practice, on the one hand, and the celebration and commemoration of its past faithfulness thereof, on the other hand, are particular to each religious group of people living together as a community for a long period. Special circumstances of the crypto-faith communities strengthened these factors even further.

For example, all religious practices involve selection. Therefore any group's common religious practice constitutes a form of selection that becomes part of the group's collective religious memory and one of its defining factors.<sup>96</sup>

It is acceptable to see modernisation as an external pressure on Jewish identity that caused the selection of values and customs. This selection led to a secularisation of Judaism and a redefinition

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<sup>93</sup> Pierre Nora versus Yosef Haim Yerushalmi, cited in Jacques Ehrenfreund, "Memoire et intégration" (above, n. 90), 6.

<sup>94</sup> Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle, WA and London: University of Washington Press 1983, 5–26, and particularly 44–45.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Butler, "Memory: A Mixed Blessing," in *Memory* (above, n. 90), 23.

<sup>96</sup> Valenci, "From Sacred History" (above, n. 92), 284–89.

of Jewish social identity at the same time. Similarly, the adherence of crypto-Jews to the commandments was a selection in favor of religious faithfulness, no less than it was a conscious manifesto of an independent identity.<sup>97</sup> In fact, for at least some of them, it may have constituted a secular culture and tradition totally devoid of religious meaning, as was the case of Pedro de la Caballería, who wrote a sharp denunciation of the Jewish religion and yet was caught by the Inquisition for visiting Jews on holidays and enjoying traditional food.<sup>98</sup>

In fact, all crypto-faith communities were particularly dependent on selection and memory, both factors somewhat interconnected, as at least some of the selection was involuntary, a result of forgetfulness. The faith of these communities had elements of recreation, or sometimes creation from memory. Even when by religious standards some practices could have been considered secondary or redundant, they were still retained. The conception of common memories, born of a common faith, and later transmission of a memory (of) faith, would tend to create a community with common cultural customs. Endogamy, both cause and result of the “communal” faith, turned this new religious culture into a communal choice and therefore a communal tradition.

For the Judeoconversos the selection was felt to have created,

a new religion, neither wholly Jewish nor wholly Christian, evolved among the secret Jews of Portugal. It was a belief that combined secrecy with fear, partial memory with substantial loss. Its observances included much fasting, abbreviated prayers in which only one Hebrew word (Shem Haadnut) was retained, shortened festivals that could be covertly observed at home, and a special set of rituals reserved primarily for women.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> A similar analogy between the pressure of assimilation in a modern society to the pressure of conversion is remarkably enough brought up by a young Mashhadi of the New York Community, Dennis Hakim, and by Natascha Nassimi, “The Mashhadi Community,” *Megillah* no. 47, Youth Supplement (January 1995), 30.

<sup>98</sup> Yovel, *Spinoza* (above, n. 23), 493 n. 21.

<sup>99</sup> Gerber, *The Jews of Spain* (above, n. 3), 143–44.

Selection also meant different emphases. The Huguenot preachers *au désert* had two particular themes they used to propound. One was the Babylonian exile and the other the suffering of Jesus. The Babylonian theme represented the feeling of exile, even when at home physically, because of the severance of all ties with co-religionists. Thus, they adopted Jerusalem as their symbol and identified with its adversities. This identification was important because it spoke of hope: as the Jews were brought back from Babylon unexpectedly, so would their own deliverance surely come. And unlike Calvin, who dealt little with the sufferings of Jesus and the cruelty he underwent, the Huguenot preachers in France discoursed on the subject for hours. Because of their special condition and the themes they emphasized, they adopted a more humane, even if not always more tolerant, attitude towards Jews. The importance of the difference in their emphases and their attitudes towards Jews can be seen during the Holocaust when they came to the aid of the Jews in the villages of the Cévennes.<sup>100</sup>

Such changes in emphasis lead to the strengthening of the communal observation of practices. Indeed, many Jewish precepts demand communal attendance, but with the Mashhadis, necessity turned almost everything into a communal achievement. Ritual slaughter was too dangerous and complicated to be achieved by any single family. Therefore, when animals were slaughtered, the meat was distributed among community members before outsiders could detect any unusual occurrence, creating a partnership of danger as well as food.<sup>101</sup> The secret prayer places, the secret teaching, baking Matzoth (unleavened bread) on Passover, acquiring the Lullav (palm branch) and Etrog (citron) on Sukkoth — all were communal feats, participated in by many, not individual achievements.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Myriam Yardeni, *Huguenots and Jews* (in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1998, esp. 113–18.

<sup>101</sup> Tziyon Zabihi, in Patai, *Jadid al-Islam* (above, n. 38), 230.

<sup>102</sup> Both Dilmani and Zabihi and many others, even when they are not trying to make a point about communal life and co-operation, inadvertently stress this character of the maintenance of Jewish life. See for instance: Account given in 1939 by Samad Aqa

Among the Mashhadi Jews, selection was partly a matter of circumstances, partly a matter of choice. This meant that as circumstances improved, conformity with acknowledged practices increased, too. Even so, the choice of the minimum of traditional law that was kept at all costs was consciously of a segregating nature.<sup>103</sup>

Important as selection was, even more so were practices of short duration that assumed a distinct character among the Mashhadis. Passover posed a major problem for players of the double game whether in Spain, Portugal or Iran. Its centrality demanded acknowledgment, yet there was always the danger of detection. Like their predecessors the Judeoconversos in Spain and Portugal, the Mashhadis tried to avert danger by observing the holiday before or after its assigned date. Even when celebrated on time, Passover was marked only by the avoidance of leavened food and the consumption of rice for the entire holiday. The Chanukah candles presented a similar challenge. They were kept apart instead of on a menorah (candelabrum) as is customary. Thus, if an unwanted stranger came in, the candles were easily distributed around the room, thereby losing their Jewish character.<sup>104</sup> By one particular account, the Mashhadis replaced the building of the Sukkah (tabernacle) with a Zekhira, a commemorative act: symbolic greenery inside the house had to suffice, since obviously, the building itself could not be constructed.<sup>105</sup>

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son of Yosef Dilmani edited by Aqa Mulla Yosef son of Aqa Abdul Samad Dilmani, Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, S25/5291, cited in Yehoshua-Raz, *MiNidkhei Yisrael BeAfghanistan* (above, n. 40), 116–17.

<sup>103</sup> Muslim resentment at their segregation could turn into a pogrom; cf. Mullah Yosef ben Aqa ‘Abdul Samad Dilmani cited in Patai, *Jadid al-Islam*, 82 (original in Hebrew preserved in Central Zionist Archive, S25/5291).

<sup>104</sup> Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad* (above, n. 9), 48–9; The account of Farrajullah Nasrullayoff Livian (1874–1951), in Patai, *Jadid al-Islam*, 212; See also special burial customs — a combination of Jewish and Muslim customs — as they changed with the circumstances of the Jews: Patai, *Jadid al-Islam*, 268–72.

<sup>105</sup> Y. Ben-Zvi, “Edut Hadasha Al Anusei Mashhad (Kefi Sherashamti Mipi Ehad MiZe’ezaiehem),” *Shivtei Yisrael BeVeit HaNasi Byrushalayim*, re-edited in Y. Ben-Zvi, *Mechkarim UMekorot*, eds. Z. Shazar and M. Benyahu, Jerusalem 1966, 333–34.

Another characteristic of the Mashhadis was their yearning for the land of Israel, expressed with an exceptional fervour even at the turn of the century, when Zionism captured the imagination of the Iranian Jewish community. Although they conceived such yearning as part of the community's religious ritual, its manifestations were outside the strictly religious custom, and consequently constituted another interpretation of their identity. This is best indicated by the name accorded those who visited the Land of Israel while on their way to fulfil one of the major Islamic precepts — the visit to Mecca: "Pilgrims (Olei) to Mecca and Zion," two so-different destinations, one an anathema of the other, coupled in one name.<sup>106</sup> Was it a blend of Muslim with Jewish ways, or a Muslim façade for Jewish yearning?

Was the trip to the Land of Israel a more important reminder of the promise of deliverance of the Jewish people for those in deepest exile? For the Mashhadis, the connection to the Land of Israel constituted a bond with former generations and also a means of identification with the Jewish people. Their sufferings might be comforted by the very promise of redemption accorded to the entire Jewish people. The Land of Israel was the heart of this promise, and it was therefore the heart of the Jewish experience in the Mashhadi community. After the underground years were over, this yearning for the Land of Israel would receive much more overt expression, even less related to religious ritual. For example, Rabbi Levi Nissimi (1884–1959) had written inside his prayer book (*Sidur*) a list of dates in Jewish history, yet in spite of the place they are written in, the lists are not exclusively of religious events. In fact, they bring Jewish history up to his own times, including the first stirrings of modern nationalism in the Land of Israel.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Azaria Levi, "Yehudei Paras VeHaAlia Laregel LeMecca," *Davar*, 4.1.73, republished in *Yehudei Paras*, Jerusalem 1979; Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad* (above, n. 9), 28, 57; Patai, *Jadid al-Islam*, 87.

<sup>107</sup> Lists in the handwriting of Rabbi Levi Nissimi in his prayer book of Livorno *Tehilah LeMoshe Ish HaE-lohim* (1892). See a similar activity in European Jewry during the Middle Ages: Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (above, n. 94), 32, 46.



This special yearning for the Land of Israel correlates in a way with the Huguenots' and the Judeoconverts' leaning toward millenarianism to the extent that it won them criticism by their more orthodox co-religionists. Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713), the leader of the exiles and an ardent millenarian, was strongly attacked for his views.<sup>108</sup> Among the Judeoconverts, the particular tendency towards the belief that Shabtai Zvi was the true Messiah, unacceptable to orthodox Judaism, is quite noticeable. The high expectancy of imminent redemption, along with the feeling fostered during the underground years of being among the chosen few, can explain this tendency.<sup>109</sup>

Thus, the secrecy needed for any and all practices created in all crypto faith groups a network of secret society customs — creating cohesion within the group, and distinguishing it from others. Each and every time a religious practice was achieved by communal means, it was not only a feat of ritual strengthening of religious identity. It was even to a greater extent a ritual strengthening of social and communal identity. The more such acts there were, the more their effectiveness grew.

The continual dangers the community had to face gave special significance to each such act, which was later celebrated and commemorated by the group. Pierre Nora establishes a deep, unbridgeable division between “true memory,” which is expressed unconsciously in deed and habits, and “historicized memory” which we are always struggling to unearth.<sup>110</sup> The conversion factor was instrumental in forming both types. Crypto-faith communities amassed true memories peculiar to their conditions; the conversion factor shaped their everyday life because of the danger brought into the community — physical and

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<sup>108</sup> Yardeni, *Huguenots and Jews* (above, n. 100), 89–90. Messianic ideas developed among the Moriscos as well: Fadel Abdallah, “On the Social and Cultural History of the Moriscos,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Studies* 3:1 (1986), 152–53.

<sup>109</sup> Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (above, n. 35), 46–47; Yovel, *Spinoza* (above, n. 23), 63–64.

<sup>110</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 12–14.

spiritual — and the means achieved to ward it off. At the same time the conversion factor was also providing a source for historicized memory. First, many of their religious practices had to be in some measure an act of historicized memory. Secondly, their particularized existence was creating new heroes, some of whom not even recognized as such by co-religionists outside the community. The Judeoconvertos, for example, were imbued with a strong sense that the victims of the Inquisition were authentic heroes, while for Old Christians they were *relapso*, and for some Halakhic authorities perhaps not Jews at all.<sup>111</sup>

The wish to commemorate these heroes was a strong incentive for writing history. The writing of history is one of the first stages in the expression of communal particularity, and its transmission an important means of advancing communal consciousness. The Huguenots of the eighteenth century differ from their predecessors of the seventeenth century by an awareness of their own history. In recognising a link with preceding generations, they thus fortified their own resistance.<sup>112</sup> The Moriscos' reaction to the alien religion imposed on them was a strong historical consciousness about the Moors' past ascendancy, which was supposed to strengthen their pride and hence faithfulness to their Islamic culture and religion.<sup>113</sup>

The tendency to utilise historicized memory as a means for strengthening communal identity is very obvious among the Mashhadis. Even while Mashhadi folklore was transmitting a heroic version of its history by word of mouth, the main hero continued to be the community as such. Even the forced conversion, the commemoration of which started instantly after the event occurred, provided no names of victims, no names of saints.<sup>114</sup> When they started recording their history

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<sup>111</sup> Yovel, *Spinoza*, 115–16.

<sup>112</sup> Joutard, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes" (above, n. 6), 368.

<sup>113</sup> Abdallah, "Cultural History of the Moriscos" (above, n. 108), 152, 155.

<sup>114</sup> Consequently, even the exact number was forgotten. For the first commemoration, see Y. Ben-Zvi, "Midivrei Yemei Anusei Mashhad (Shtei Teudot)," *Zion* 4 (1939), republished in Y. Ben-Zvi, *Mekhhkarim* (above, n. 105), 322, 326. The various accounts of the conversion differ as to the number of victims and the immediate rea-

in the 1930s, it was with the conscious intent of strengthening communal ties. The ascendance of the Pahlavi dynasty brought an amelioration of status for the Jews of Iran, providing an opening for Mashhadi Jews to leave their city and taking the edge off the sense of danger for the community's Jewish survival. But then a new fear set in: the fear of the community's absorption in the generality of the Jewish people after their exodus from Mashhad. As Pierre Nora so beautifully puts it, we commemorate that which "without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep . . . away. We buttress our identities upon such bastions, but if what they defend were not threatened, there would be no need to build them." In other words, as their memory of Judaism was again able to become "true" memory, it was the turn of their communal memory to become "historicised."<sup>115</sup>

Two writers are particularly important, because they were doing their research with the outright intention of publicising their work — Farrajullah Nassrullayoff Livian and Yaghuob Dilmanian. Both started their writings about the same time, both saw their works published many years later in New York, and both had their work read by community members long before having it published. Still, they were not alone in their task. In a sequence of meetings in Jerusalem in 1944, the elders of the community got together in a synagogue to tell the story/ history of the community.<sup>116</sup> All of them would have identified with the words of Dilmanian:

It has occurred to me, Yaghoub Dilmanian, that unless this history is recorded, it shall be forgotten with the passage of time, and future generations shall regret that no one took it upon himself to set it down in writing. Hence, . . . I set about collecting memoirs, by word of mouth. . . .<sup>117</sup>

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son for the attack on the community. For some of the versions: Patai, *Jadid al-Islam*, 51–65.

<sup>115</sup> Nora, "Between Memory and History" (above, n. 110), 12–14.

<sup>116</sup> M. Khaklai, *Chayei Hayehudim Anusei Ha'ir Mashhad Belran*, Mizpe Ramon 1982, 5.

<sup>117</sup> Dilmanian, *History of the Jews of Mashad* (above, n. 9), 7.

The fact that these communities were in constant danger gave them their own saints and heroes, heroes whose memory became part of their faith, adding a new meaning to their faith-memory. So it was that the Camisard Rebellion for the Huguenot minority was a fountain of folk-memory. Even those who disapproved of the rebellion and of the prophesying that came with it would sanctify its memory. The commemoration of heroes who had died for the faith gave the Protestant minority, though smaller after the Revocation, an awareness of its own history and thus the promise of survival.<sup>118</sup> The Judeoconversos, the victims of the Inquisition who were sinners in the eyes of the Catholics and often discounted as Jews by Orthodox Jewry, were truly saints to their underground communities.<sup>119</sup>

### *Conclusion*

During the underground years of these crypto-faith communities, much of each faith and its ritual expression consisted of either what one managed to snatch away from the corroding teeth of forgetfulness or what one re-enacted if only to remember who one was. In cases where others shared this remembered faith, and where the numbers were large enough to allow endogamy to sustain the group, a new community was born. Each such community had heroes and a history that in turn were also committed to memory, first to sustain the heroism and then to sustain the new community born of that heroism.

Consequently, when relief came, each community had stronger bonds than their co-religionists who did not share memories of danger and heroic endeavour, no memorisation of heroes of the underground period, and none of the close blood ties that resulted from endogamy. The evolution of their religious identity into a social-cultural and even ethnic identity was not a process whereby an elite group utilized religious motifs to generate cultural cohesion. Their identity sprang

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<sup>118</sup> Joutard, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes" (above, n. 6), 367–68; also, on the commemoration of ancestors, Mentzer, *Blood and Belief* (above, n. 52), 159.

<sup>119</sup> For an interpretation of *Celestina* and in particular the victims of the Inquisition as saints, see Yovel, *Spinoza*, 115–7.

from individual choices concerning religious goals, grew by means of communal organisation, and solidified through the cultural process of “memorising” who one “had been,” generating something new that continued to grow.

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HILDA NISSIMI

# THE JANUS FACE OF RELIGION: ON THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR IN “NEW WARS”

HEINRICH SCHÄFER<sup>1</sup>

## *Summary*

Every religion can be a base for respect *and* for violence. This is how the Bosnian peace activist Cvijeta Novacovic puts it. The Janus face of religion becomes especially visible when religion and politics mingle closely. This is the case in many of the so called “new wars,” as for example in Bosnia, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, and other places.

The present article focuses on how religion works within conflictive environments to mobilize people and to re-structure their identities. First, we will examine the special dynamics of new wars in order to focus the problem. Then, religion will be framed as a specific strategy of identity politics. On this basis we can analyze some ways by which religious logics operate in conflictive settings—for violence *or* for respect. The Bosnian war will serve as an example in most parts of the article.

Every religion is a base for respect and coexistence *and*  
for violence and war.

It's up to the people what to do with religion.

Cvijeta Novacovic (peace activist, Tuzla)

The God Janus was said to watch and protect any transition from both sides of the door-panel, inside and outside. Later on, people learned that he had not only two faces but also two personalities.

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to apologize for his fairly “rough” English. Due to an unexpected and extended stay in the hospital, it has not been possible to engage a native speaker for revision. A longer and somewhat different version of this article was produced during the proceedings of a four years international research group on Religion under the conditions of globalization at *Chateau de Bossey*, the research center of the World Council of Churches. It is a pleasure to thank all my colleagues and the moderator, Julio de Santa Ana, for sharing their expertise and experience.

In “new wars,” religions claim the presence of their gods in every transition, too. If this is to protect or not, and what “personality” these gods develop, will be subject to inquiry in this essay.

In the framework of globalization and the development of different “modernities” (Eisenstadt 2000), religion has during the last decades acquired a role as an important element in a new type of conflicts: regional wars between mobilized cultural (mostly ethnic) identities, so called “new wars.”<sup>2</sup> In Sri Lanka Buddhist Singhalese and Hindu Tamil people are in conflict, as are Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir, or Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Muslim Bosnians in the former Yugoslavia; in Sudan and Nigeria Muslims and Christians, associated with different tribal origins, fight one another. In any of these — and other — conflicts, ethnic, religious, political, social and economic motives mix. Their most important distinction from the classically modern type of war is that ethnic and religious identities play a major role to mobilize the conflict parties. They are important operators in a process of “re-culturing politics” (Senghaas).

In this article we will give special attention to religion in “new wars,” and examine its specific role in mobilizing conflict parties and structuring their identities. In order to find a proper focus, we will briefly examine the dynamics of the re-culturing of politics and of waging old and new wars. Then, we will frame religion within the strategies of identity politics and analyze some ways by which religious logics operate. This will allow us to recognize some specific effects of religion in conflictive social environments.

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<sup>2</sup> Concepts are still in a flux, as the phenomenon is recent. Because of their characteristics, many scholars speak of a new type of armed conflict as “postmodern,” “privatized,” “unofficial,” “postnational,” or simply “new” wars. See, e.g., Ettrich 2001; Kaldor 1999; Knöbl and Schmidt 2000. In this article I follow the approach of Mary Kaldor. Herfried Münkler (2000) doubts that a distinction between old and new wars is helpful. However, even Münkler (2001) states that private actors play a special role in recent conflicts.

*I. Globalization and the “Re-culturing” of Politics*

“New wars” arise from the transformation of modern political and economic structures under conditions of accelerated globalization during the last decades.

As for the economic structures, Dieter Senghaas (1998:161 ff.) points toward the failure of post colonial developmental nationalism in Third World countries as an important factor for the rise of a militant “re-culturization” of politics. Quite often, those elites who are largely responsible for the failures seek to elude the opposition of frustrated middle classes and the marginalized by enticing ethnic conflicts. Strategies of re-culturization of politics also might affirm particular rights and identities in order to counter influences from outside. In any case, the goal is a new and feasible political project for the actors involved.

Another context of militant ethnic and religious reorientation is the decline of the modern nation state. It gives way to the development of “new visions of collective identity” (Eisenstadt 2000:16) for many kinds of movements, be it religious or secular, multicultural or fundamentalist, communal or ethnic. The nation state’s power and legitimacy are being severely eroded. From above, transnational economy and political organizations reduce the state’s ability and competence for effective action; from below, the increasing lack of financial resources (e.g., taxes), the increase and privatization of violence, and the very social movements themselves scatter the state’s authority; and from the inside, ineffectiveness and corruption dissipate its legitimacy.

Finally, growing social differences between winners and losers from globalization are becoming increasingly visible for everybody. Information technology together with better education among declining social classes all over the world produce a clear sense of an increasing loss of opportunities among many people. As these opportunities are very difficult to regain on the economic or political field, and as there is not always a clearly articulated political consciousness of this situation (Kaldor 1999:117), the field of cultural relations — e.g., ethnic or religious — becomes attractive for the mobilization of people in order



to achieve political goals. Thus, religion and ethnic belonging can become a resource of political and military power. The violent forms of such mobilization are of interest in this paper.

## *II. Old and New Wars*

“New wars” (Kaldor 1999) do away with the solemn, but not very old distinction between war and peace, as for most of their protagonists, “war” means prosperity and peace means decay.

### *Old Wars*

Modern war has its origin in the nation state. The internal pacification of the state (e.g., the end of feuds) brought about the creation of conscripted and (later) professional armies and potentially hostile relations to other states. Between the 15th and the 19th centuries, war thus developed into a highly governed and controlled activity. The war of Clausewitz is — at least in theory — a rational instrument of political power, and the different conventions of Geneva aimed to regulate and minimize the impact of military activity on civilians. Modern war was organized according to three basic distinctions: public vs. private, domestic vs. external, and civilian vs. military.

As religion in classic modernity belongs to the private sphere, it lost its importance as a reason for war. The state’s interest dictates and legitimizes warfare. Religion only serves, besides nationalism, as an additional means to ensure the loyalty of troops and populations.

A first step towards the dissolution of the three basic distinctions created by modern war was the “total war” of the 20th century. Complete societies were subjected to the logic of war: an all encompassing war-economy turned everything into instruments of war; in consequence, everything had to be bombed by the enemy. A second step was guerrilla and counter-insurgency warfare, in both of which — in very different ways! — the civilian population (and thus propaganda) came to be a central factor in military activities. New wars go one step further.

## New Wars

Mary Kaldor analyzes the conflict in Bosnia (1992–1995) as an example of a new kind of war.<sup>3</sup> This retains some of the characteristics mentioned above. Yugoslavia was transformed from communist to capitalist modernity with less precipitation than, e.g., the Soviet Union, but with considerable friction. From above, the crisis of the Yugoslavian state created a lack of legitimacy for the ruling political elites. From below, economic decline and separationist politics fueled a climate of insecurity. Given an increasing scarcity of political resources, the elites changed from communist to nationalist discourse, articulating nationalism through ethnic and religious identities.

The *ante bellum* society in Bosnia, however, did not by itself evidence relations of “centuries old hatred,” as some politicians put it, nor was it a multicultural wonderland. While certain differences between more liberal urban and more traditional rural areas existed, people “were conscious about national and religious differences in their closer environment, without taking them as potential reasons for conflict” (Calic 1998:338). Nevertheless, due to historical reasons, religion (not language, Serbo-Croatian) was the most important distinctive element in ethnic terms, even if religious practice had lost much of its significance during communist rule.<sup>4</sup> Bosnian Muslims are ethnic Serbs who converted during the Ottoman rule (1389 to mid-17th century), and who held, since then, the economically strongest positions in Bosnian society, with a slight urban emphasis. Orthodox Serbs, and a Catholic Croatian minority, traditionally represent weaker social positions and a slight rural emphasis. Since the Ottoman Empire, the “millet system” (different religions in one administrative unit) had created a space for the coexistence of these groups in Bosnia. This kind of “good neighborhood” (*komsiluk*) has been called an “institutionalized

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<sup>3</sup> On the conflict in Bosnia, see especially Kaldor 1999, and Sells 1996, as well as Bremer 2003, Calic 1996, Calic 1998, Dartel 2000, Melcic 1999, Powers 1996, and Shenk 1993.

<sup>4</sup> In 1990, 61% of young Bosnian Muslims had never visited a mosque, 70% of Serbian and 35% of Croatian youths had never looked into a Church (Calic 1998:343).

communitarianism" (Xavier Bougarel), even if differences between urban and rural settings have to be taken into account. Intercultural ties, such as intermarriage and an encompassing secular culture in the cities, were fostered even more by communist secularism under Tito. Correspondingly, six months before the elections of 1990, 74% of the voters welcomed a possible proscription of nationalist parties in order to preserve good neighborhood relations. But it turned out differently.

Political mobilization took place along the lines of religiously defined ethnic-nationalist parties of Croat, Serb and Muslim orientation.<sup>5</sup> Traditional forms of power-sharing deteriorated quickly. The government coalition and the parliament fell apart in 1991. The nationalist parties began to organize and even arm "their" peoples according to ethnic and religious criteria, and "autonomous areas" were being defined (Calic 1998:349). In consequence people had few options other than to rally around their own ethnic-religious tradition. But these traditions were already caught up in a dynamic of political polarization, heated by religious institutions (Kaldor 1999:67 ff.) A new war broke out, initiated by snipers opening fire on the peace movement in Sarajevo, thus indicating its main goal: the elimination of a "secular, multicultural, pluralistic society" (Kaldor 1999:72).<sup>6</sup>

The most important characteristic of the war in Bosnia, according to Mary Kaldor, is that it was waged by different power groups (not by the state) against civilians. This, first, turns the concept of modern war upside down, according to which regular troops fight against each other. Second, it also changes the concept of guerrilla and counter-insurgency warfare, inasmuch as now the state is no longer the most

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<sup>5</sup> Only the ex-communists and a reformist alliance were explicitly multi-ethnic (Calic 1998:348).

<sup>6</sup> One might be tempted to see here a cultural fault-line-conflict according to the Huntington model (Huntington 1993, 1996). But it turns out to be the other way around. Political and economic interests mobilized ethnic and religious traditions in a situation of crisis. The basic problem here is not culture but politics. Thus, the approach to the conflict as an outburst of centuries-old hatred, instead of serving as an analytical tool, simply reproduces the discourse of ethnical and religious particularists.

important military actor. Third, the *raison d'état* is no longer the ideological reference point, but ethnic origin, religious orientation and money (resources etc.) take its place.

Instead of the state, “private” actors become increasingly important: paramilitary groups under criminal leaders partly cooperate with the state and partly do their own business with warfare and collateral damages. Foreign mercenaries (Mujahedin or private military firms) engage with different parties for the sake of money, recognition by political elites, or even adventure. Local militias in turn search to protect villages from these groups. Finally, regular troops of interested states or state-like constructions engage in the fighting, as well as international, regular military (e.g., UN-troops, NATO, the United States). In Bosnia—as in many other places, like Rwanda or Somalia—regular troops were not in a position to protect civilians, even if they were willing to do so. The most important military actors were irregular forces that acted flexibly, widely dispersed throughout the country but at the same time in close contact by means of state of the art communications technology. Their main target was the civilian population. In order to gain political control over the population, terror against civilians (threats, shootings, violations, expulsions) was systematically employed to achieve religious/ethnic “cleansing” of territories and divisions between them. In an economic situation that did not allow for much more than to survive on humanitarian aid, to flee or to become criminal, the members of the paramilitary groups decided for the latter. While the regular troops and mercenaries were mostly paid from the outside (by governments or diaspora communities), the irregular troops financed their subsistence and warfare to a large extent by means of illegal “war-taxes” exacted on whatever possible, by extortion, robbing, pillage, smuggling (weapons, drugs, diamonds, etc.), black market business, etc. For this reason, even the economic logic of war is turned upside down: whereas the activities of a regular soldier in modern wars is not a lucrative business, members of paramilitary forces—specially the higher ranking—are able to turn war and common insecurity into a source of income. Consequently, their goal is not to reestablish civil institutions and public security, but quite the oppo-

site: to maintain as long as possible a state of common insecurity and the rule of the stronger. As war is business and the civilians are the main target, it is no wonder that irregular forces do not establish clear fronts nor seek battle with the enemy forces. On the contrary, they avoid battle and even bargain with the enemy about economic benefits against military control or action.

Thus, it is not even predictable with a high range of probability whether, e.g., a Serbian informal unit would act or not against the Croat population of a certain village. It might choose not to do so, if a deal with a unit of Croat irregulars has been negotiated. But one thing is always almost certain to take place: any group of irregular forces represses, terrorizes, or exterminates *moderate* civilians. Ethnic “cleansings” target, of course, members of other ethnic-religious groups. But, as Mary Kaldor (1999:91f.) points out, a very important other target group are those who seek to bridge the gaps, moderate conflicts, and help their neighbors — whatever ethnic origin they are: Serbs who hide or defend their Muslim neighbors, Jews who help the Muslims flee, and many other courageous individuals.

Summing up, it may be said that a “new war” does away with the most important characteristics of the modern type of war. Especially clear is that the main military target is the civilian population, that the most important fighters are irregular paramilitary groups (sometimes in conjunction with regular forces), and that the aim of their actions is not so much control of territories by military presence as political control over civilians by terror. Irregular fighters and the politicians behind them turn religion into a public identity marker to flag out civilians as either targets or supply base.

### III. *Identity Politics*

Many of the “new war”-type conflicts follow the logic of an “ethnicization” of social relationships (Eder *et al.* 2002; Eder 1998). In many cases,<sup>7</sup> this is equivalent to “religicization.” According to this approach, it is erroneous to think that ethnic or religious belonging *itself*

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<sup>7</sup> E.g., Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Palestine, and Northern Ireland.

is the reason for conflicts. The latter opinion corresponds rather to the nationalist theory — going back to Herder — that nations themselves are rooted in ethnicity. Instead, what happens is that new war protagonists overstate ethnic and religious traditions in search for political power. Much like religious fundamentalism, this process is anchored in traditions of everyday life, selects certain symbols, stresses them as emblematic for certain “ethnic” or “religious” identities, and combines them with political programs over against other groups. Such identities are at the same time traditional *and* constructed. They correspond to feelings of belonging *and* emphasize artificial contradictions. They are traditional in terms of the central contents of their discourse: they use old and well known symbols, refer to collective memory, and operate according to habitual practices of certain populations. They are constructed in terms of the boundaries that they draw by overstating certain contents over against alleged enemies; they use symbols, etc. to mark differences and contradictions, and to produce self-recognition within a group through the exclusion of others. Emblematic labels serve for both aspects of the process.

In this way, traditional religious and ethnic belonging can be transformed into a resource for political power. In situations in which economic or political resources are too scarce to be used for reaching political goals or control economic goods, elites can construct conflictive sceneries and mobilize people on ethnic and/or religious grounds. As stated at the beginning of this article, such a situation can be the breakdown of a nation state, a developmental crisis, or the collective confrontation with an extremely strong external pressure. As the once overarching distinction between left and right is becoming more and more meaningless, and as even political opposition to globalization turns more and more global itself, social contradictions between winners and losers of globalization can no longer be clearly articulated in political terms. Consequently, the void of political self-definition under such conditions is ready to be filled with ethnic and religious identity discourse, and socio-economic problems are transformed into symbolic violence.

Collective identity, religious or ethnic, is a resource both for those with economic and/or political power and for those without it (Eder 1998:30). But identity politics run the danger of an uncontrollable development since they bargain with a good that can not be bargained with: identity. The scenario of new wars shows an important characteristic. It is neither true nor false that new wars lack rationality. For the ethnic-nationalist, religious and (para-)military elites conducting it, a new war is primarily a purposive rational enterprise to further their political and economic benefits<sup>8</sup> — even if they might personally identify with their ethnic or religious backgrounds. For the mobilized marginal population, however, ethnic and religious identity is much more than a political calculus. Their religious and/or ethnic identity represents for them truth, life and dignity. Thus, some hardly calculable factors enter into the political game.

Goldstein and Rayner (1994:367 f.) state the differences between conflicts related to identity and to interest. According to them, conflicts about interests have a clear focus and can be addressed quite easily, because they involve “third things” like material goods or political positions. The strategies point towards material betterment, which people value less than life itself. Negotiation is possible. Interest oriented conflicts also correspond to the highly developed rational choice framework of modern politics. Identity conflicts, on the other hand, are very hard to address politically. Negotiation is much more difficult, especially under the presuppositions of a rational choice framework. This is because identity conflicts resist clarity of goals and reasons, and tend to mystification. Moreover, they involve the intricate logics of self-esteem, dignity and recognition, and the sense of belonging of the actors. The actors orient their strategies (from negotiation to suicide bombing) by dispositions that are anchored, beyond the limits even of the individual itself, in religion and community, which means that individual life is not of primary importance. This strategy of collective identity affirmation is precisely what answers the demand of

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<sup>8</sup> Kaldor 1999:160. This is the case even in the sense that normative regulations or traditional ritualization of warfare is being ignored for the sake of more effectiveness.

individuals when they are uprooted and lack cognitive and emotional dispositions to get along with a new and violent situation.

In such circumstances, (former) governmental, political or intellectual elites, traditional leaders, religious personalities and skillful criminals can serve their own material interests by mobilizing people through ethnic and religious discourse. The higher the insecurity they themselves produce, the more attractive becomes what they offer, and the fewer alternatives remain that may be built on everyday co-operation or religious syncretism. The deeper people can be engaged in collective violence, moreover, the stronger is the cohesion that may be produced by the bonds of guilt and hatred. Such an environment fosters a typical combination of factors supporting religious identity politics in the context of new wars: the main actors are increasingly non-governmental groups, movements and organizations; the main resource for mobilization is discourse, and for implementation symbolic and physical violence; and the main contents of discourse is a mix of religious and ethnic elements. But the conducting logic is double edged: a purposive, materially oriented rationality among the elites, and religious-ethnic identity affirmation among their followers.

#### *IV. Religion*

Religion is an important condensational point of mobilized identities, especially in non-European modernities and in traditional societies. Religious identities facilitate both particularist and cosmopolitan<sup>9</sup> strategies in contexts of violence. Particularists (or fundamentalists) seek to impose their particular criteria universally or, at least, upon everybody within certain territories. Cosmopolitans foster values of universal humanity in any particular case. The former exclude others by own standards. The latter join with others, according to standards of mutual human acceptance.

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<sup>9</sup> The distinction between cosmopolitan and fundamentalist (particularist) orientations refers to Giddens 1994. Kaldor (1999) elaborates with it very interesting alternatives for international intervention into new war-type conflicts.



### Religious Identities

It can be affirmed that, on the macro level, the boundaries between ethnic units are largely congruent with the lines of religious differences. This is due to the fact that, especially in traditional societies, religion makes up very much of the ordinary people's social (and ethnic) identity. Only modernity, rapid migrational movements and multicultural societies of today (like Canada or Malaysia) seem to change the picture. But still, multicultural and multireligious formations existed much earlier, too (e.g., under the Ottomans in Bosnia, or the Muslim rule in Spain). However, even in a multicultural setting, religion often plays an important role as a cultural identity marker for the ethnic groups implied. Even more: as the example of the USA shows, civil religion can overwhelm different religious identities as an ideology of national unity, but implicitly confirm the dominance of one ethnic group over the whole multicultural setting.<sup>10</sup>

On the micro level of collective identities, religion can be understood as a specific condensation of culture. We can think about a collective cultural identity as a broad network of habitual dispositions to perceive, to judge and to act, common to all actors of a certain culture and, at the same time, comprising some specific differences according to individuals, groups, social classes, etc. (Schäfer 2003). Religion can be modeled as a region on this network, where the fabric of signification has "the color of" religion and traditionally is very densely woven. Even in European secularized societies — like Yugoslavia — where religion may no longer be very central to the collective cognitive network, it still serves as a common reference. However, in the period preceding a new war, collective religious dispositions often become very important operators for mobilization.

### Symbolic Violence

In a context of decaying nation states and a growing significance of non-governmental actors, public discourse becomes increasingly

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<sup>10</sup> Possibly, Indonesian *panjasilas* work much the same way on the basis of Islam.

important in general and, more specifically, for the exercise of power (Eder 2000:29, 201 ff.). Especially in new wars, social movements and organizations (like paramilitary groups) confront one another. Ethnic and religious identity-mobilization operates with symbolic boundaries as follows: as an identity is being constructed, some people are included in it and, by the very same act, others are excluded. This is still quite normal and does not lead to problems in everyday life, as long as communication is flowing and expectations are basically positive. But if resources are scarce and interests polarize, the identities reaffirm themselves in contrast to one another, and the gaps between them widen. Actors perceive any competing identity as a threat — not only to certain limited interests, but to their own identity: to everything they are.

In these clashes of mobilized identities symbolic violence<sup>11</sup> gains an important role in religious discourse. First of all, it means not to recognize the identity of the others as legitimate. Thus, it implies negative ascription (labeling), such as, e.g., racial discrimination, downgrading and ignoring; obstruction of the counterpart's means to express her- or himself; use of unjust, false, manipulative, etc. affirmations and discursive techniques against the other; and blocking the communication channels to and from the other. Strong actors normally opt for racism, weak actors for the "strategy of exclusive self-recognition" (Eder 2000:203).

Religion plays an important role in these processes, especially in combination with ethnic identity. Religious socialization — through life-cycle rites, schools, family traditions, etc. — combines closely with the formation of cultural habitus. In case of ethnic mobilization, therefore, religion for many people represents an anchor-point for ethnic self-recognition. Habitual dispositions to combine religious

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<sup>11</sup> We understand the term "symbolic" according to Pierre Bourdieu not so much in the sense of representation of something, but in the sense of recognition. E.g., one can understand a shaman as a representation of the divine; but this depends upon the fact that one *recognizes* him as such. For symbolic representation to be realized, the social relationship of recognition between an actor and a "symbol" is required.

and cultural practices, learned since primary socialization, can become highly salient in situations of conflict and the construction of (counter-)identities. Deep-rooted religious sentiments of belonging can thus be used as widely recognized emblematic markers for political identification. It helps even more that religion provides many ancient and long standing means for dramatizing and representing identities, like processions, shrines, life-cycle rites, everyday rites, meaningful buildings, etc. In many cases these practices and objects are combined with places or territories. But with modern mobility and growing diaspora, religious symbols become transnational as well — even though they still might be linked to significant places like Mecca or Rome. In situations of crisis, these anchor points provide a resource of emotional security for the individuals and, at the same time, link these people to strategies of politically interested identity mobilization.

In this context, religion offers a double usage to those who manipulate it. Generally, it is open to being combined with arguments of reason and common sense. Thus, it can be linked to secular political discourse, furthering even secularist goals.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, religion does not *have* to be reasonable in a “worldly” sense. Consequently, religion is a strong means to overcome instrumental rationality (such as presupposed in rational choice-models of human action). The example of Palestinian suicide bombers shows that the sense of belonging to a community and the concrete expectation for Paradise introduces another kind of rationality, the criteria of which reside far beyond individual benefits.<sup>13</sup> And finally, religion also comprises a certain tendency to make the actors believe that their positions are absolute (and not relative to others). This leads to fundamentalist mobilization.<sup>14</sup> Religion, as well as ethnic reason, constructs for people a virtual linkage

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<sup>12</sup> As it does the classical protestant argument for the separation of Church and State.

<sup>13</sup> See, on interviews with suicide bombers, Hassan 2001.

<sup>14</sup> On the practical logic of fundamentalisms, see Schäfer 2005.

to common primordial roots. This fact fosters the effectiveness of religious identity construction and the implementation of religious symbolic violence in the scenarios of new wars.

### Disruptive Mobilization

For the main protagonists in new wars, religion serves primarily as a resource to mobilize people behind (ethnically framed) political interests. As an example, we take a closer look at the Bosnian experience.<sup>15</sup>

As a heritage from the Ottoman millet-system and Tito's Yugoslavia, the urban culture in Bosnia was quite secular in pre-war society. The spoken language was not an identity marker since Serbo-Croatian was common to everybody. Religious differences were the only important markers of distinctiveness between ethnic groups—even though much of the Muslim population ethnically is Serbian as well, since their ancestors (Serbian petty aristocracy) had converted to Islam under Ottoman rule. The Serbian Orthodox Church (existing since the 10th century in the region) became under Ottoman rule an important agent of self-affirmation for the regional non-Muslim population. But it was only in the nineteenth century that religion and national identification became more closely related (Calic 1998:339). Nonetheless, religious differences lost their importance during the Communist era by an increasing secularization and by religious intermarriage, especially in the cities.<sup>16</sup>

The old concept of "good neighborhood" (*komsiluk*) in daily life had its religious correspondence in syncretic practices.<sup>17</sup> "Even today the same amulets are worn by both, Christians and Muslims. The Virgin Mary is as venerated among Muslims as among Christians

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<sup>15</sup> For the religious aspects of the Bosnian war referred to in the following, see Sells 1998, as well as Bremer 2003, Calic 1998, Powers 1996, Shenk 1993, and Tschuy 1997.

<sup>16</sup> Less than half of Bosnian Muslims, and Croats and only 25% of Bosnian Serbs, in 1991, saw ethno-religious belonging as a criterion for marriage (Calic 1998:345).

<sup>17</sup> Very similar practices underlie the *kashmiriyat* in Kashmir, presently being destroyed by Muslim-Hindu polarization.

... Christians sometimes invite Muslim dervishes to dance and read passages from the Qur'an at their festivals" (Tschuy 1997:106).

Nevertheless, religion was still a strong *possible* resource for distinction. The conflictive history of the region had contributed to the development and spread of ethnical-religious myths like the one of the Christ-like Serbian king Lazar, a myth that is deeply anchored in the collective memory and can be linked to remembrances of particular events like atrocities during World War II. Religious myths can gain a life for themselves and serve as rationale for "counter"-action later on, as it has been the case with the alleged destruction of Serbian monasteries and the genocide against Serbs by Kosovar Albanians in 1986 that served to legitimize Serbian inroads on Muslims.<sup>18</sup>

Because they are rooted in everyday socialization — mother's tales and family chats over lunch — especially older socio-religious myths have a strong potential for mobilization. Myths are of direct use for political interest groups, Church leaders and elites in their strategies of ethnic identity mobilization by discourse. A strong example for the political construction of an ethnic-religious myth can be found in the activities surrounding the 600th anniversary of the battle at *Kosovo Polje* in 1989. According to Sells (1998, 1999), this celebration served as the culmination point of many propaganda activities with the same focus: to construct a belligerent ethnic-religious Serbian identity. One of these activities was misinformation about the alleged destruction of monasteries. Others were the ritual exhumation of bones of Serbs killed by the Nazis during WW II, and nationalist propaganda depicting Muslim Serbs, Croats and Albanians as genocidal. During the commemoration of the battle at Kosovo Polje, in 1989, on location, the symbols were joined together by Slobodan Milosevic and leaders of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The medieval prince Lazar, killed in the battle by the Turks, was depicted as a Christ-like figure so that the

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<sup>18</sup> According to Sells (1999) the allegations were proved false by independent research, which only showed some isolated cases of vandalism, some graffiti and cut trees on Church property, as well as one rape in one year: hate crimes, but not genocide.

defeat could be called the “Serbian Golgotha.” The historical Serbian heartland of Kosovo thus appeared as the “Serbian Jerusalem.” In this scenery, the murders committed by the Nazis during WW II and the alleged attacks against Orthodox monasteries became religiously *and* militarily charged symbols.

This symbolic operation reaches still deeper, if seen in the context of “Christoslavism.” The opinion that Slavs are Christian by the very essence of their being Slavs uses religion to absolutize an ethnic identity. It replaces ethnic belonging with religious orientation and constructs an ethnic nationalist identity by religious means. This operation of practical logic works the other way around, too: all those Serbs who (historically) have converted to Islam are no longer Serbs but “Turks.” And as such they are to be made fully responsible for the death of king Lazar on the “Serbian Golgotha.”

These operations of combined political, ethnical and religious discourse produced (or invented) a new combined religious-ethnic identity: the strictly Orthodox Serbian one. The most important boundary is drawn against ethnic Serbs with a Muslim creed. This means that these people are the most dangerous ones for the fresh identity — precisely because of similarities and not because of differences. As a partly invented identity, the Orthodox-Serbian one had to focus very much on preserving itself from “alien contamination” (Goldstein and Rayner 1994:372).

Such preservation can be done very effectively by ethnic-religious “cleansing” through military forces. And this was precisely what the combination of symbols in the *Kosovo-Polje* commemoration festival pointed to. The effect of this symbolic conglomerate on (potentially mobilized) Serbian Orthodox people was quite obvious: “all Muslims have the blood of king Lazar and the Serbian people on their hands, since 1389, in order to occupy our heartlands.” So “cleansings” may be seen as a logical reaction.

Finally, religion, in this use, not just legitimizes political violence. It is a driving force of violence, and it gives direction to it. In the scenery of a new ethnic war, according to Mary Kaldor (1999:159), it is important to render certain regions uninhabitable for certain

people. In this sense, genocidal action is incomplete, if it leaves the symbols of religious identification intact. People of a region can be driven out of it, but they long to come back as long as their memory links them to it with pleasant bonds, such as, for instance, a former home and religious site. Therefore, systematic rape and physical atrocities may be effective weapons to destroy the desire of people to reclaim their places. Another important weapon is the systematic destruction of religious sites, thus uprooting deep-seated identifications. It is no wonder that (para-)military forces composed by Bosnian Serbs systematically destroyed non-Orthodox sacral sites, removed the rubble and turned the locations into something else, for instance parking lots, and others did similar things to Serbs. Religious symbolic violence is an important element to extinguish the sense of belonging, to uproot people and to make a region psychologically uninhabitable to them.

To damage other people's identities so severely that they can no longer inhabit their native places is one of the most extreme goals of particularist strategies. But religious and military polarization cannot tear everything apart.

### Cosmopolitan Practice

Religion also has the capability to strengthen cosmopolitan attitudes, because it is not bound to ascribe absoluteness to human projects. It is also able to *relativize* any human action in contrast to the sacred.

This capacity is partly due to the close connection that traditional folk religion maintains with the flexible practical logic of everyday life. Traditional syncretism in the context of good neighborhood relations provides strong roots for both faith and human solidarity. Even under the extreme stress of ethnic-religious "cleansing" in Bosnia, there were religious people willing to risk their lives helping persecuted believers from other religions. This kind of attitude — though strongly traditional in average actors, especially peasants — is closely related to the cosmopolitan worldview of the peace movement, of NGOs, of ecumenical organizations and others who seek to mediate and

reconstruct civil society under the conditions of new wars. It expresses a fundamental logic of social peacekeeping.

The town of Tuzla offers a special example of a cosmopolitan attitude. According to Cvijeta Novacovic,<sup>19</sup> the majority of the population of Tuzla, from the beginning of the war, opted against nationalist alternatives and tried to keep a “normal life” in town. A key issue was the first shelling of the town by paramilitary forces, the start of the war for Tuzla. Nobody was prepared, and the grenades hit a feast celebrated by the town’s youths. As their answer, the people decided to conduct a joint funeral service with Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic ministers. The funeral was held during the night, and, according to Novacovic, the service remained an important symbol for a cosmopolitan attitude of Tuzlan people and for their resistance to ethno-religious war. Novacovic and many others became activists organizing cooperation for peace.

In contexts like the Bosnian war, during open hostilities, cosmopolitan actors naturally do not have the best conditions to mobilize people for peace. Civil and Human Rights Groups, NGOs, humanist intellectuals and ordinary individuals are normally weak actors in heavily polarized and violent environments. Cosmopolitan actors immediately contradict, by their very action, the logic of new war itself. Someone who opts for reconstructing legitimate and legal institutions, to defend Human Rights, to maintain or revive interreligious tolerance, and to foster multicultural, pluralistic and democratic societies is more dangerous to any paramilitary group than any person aligned with the enemy. As mentioned above, implicit and explicit cosmopolitans are preferred targets of irregular combatants. But cosmopolitan groups can also be partners of peacekeeping international forces, a partnership that improves their position at least in post-war scenarios.

Religion, in any case, has a totally different role among this kind of actors. It is anchored in everyday syncretism, as exemplified by Muslim virgin adoration or dervishes visiting Christian homes. Everyday

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<sup>19</sup> A peace activist from Tuzla in a report to the interreligious “Visser t’Hooft Consultation on Religion, Power and Violence,” June 8–13, 2004, Chateau de Bossey.



religion is not primarily concerned with boundary construction, but with problem solving — the classical operation of what Max Weber called the “sorcerer.” Problem solving demands an open eye for possibilities for cooperation with others, regardless whether they are of the same religious confession or not. Traditional, or explicitly ecumenical actors do not stop believing in their own particular, distinctive God. But their interest in problem solving makes them search bonds to other people rather than boundaries. There are two major ways to construct a religious bond to a neighbor of a different confession. First, actors can construct the bond by reference to a transcendent God. This kind of religious logic departs from a basic distinction between “needy human beings” and “the same almighty God.” One acts as if there were just one God for all humans, without explicitly stressing differences. Moreover, one may keep silence about different religious practices, or one may emphasize commonalities. In any case, the most important goal in conflictive environments will be to achieve a live saving solidarity “in the name of God.” Second, actors may construct the bond with others by reference to human transcendence. This kind of logic departs from a distinction between “needy human beings” and “the mystery of many gods.” It is tolerated that others might have a different God (or erroneous beliefs), but they are nevertheless seen as fellow human beings. Here, solidarity is testimony of one’s own faith in the name of a “common humanity.” Both ways work. However, this practical religious relativism does not eliminate firm personal beliefs that are anchored in traditional or ecumenical value orientations and deeply stored in the habitus. The logics of human solidarity for reasons of faith can be rooted so deeply that people risk or give their lives for persecuted neighbors, whatever religion they may confess. Many examples from Bosnia and other conflictive regions give evidence of this.

Traditional everyday religion is a fragile network that is easily torn apart if severe shortage of economic or political resources combines with heavy ethno-religious propaganda. But it links up in a very “nat-

ural” way with the cosmopolitan practice of ecumenical organizations, Human Rights associations, NGOs, and similar actors.<sup>20</sup>

#### *V. Some Concluding Remarks*

What is the specific role of religion in a new war-scenario?

First of all, reference may be made to a general characteristic of religion. Religion makes people refer to a reality which is “not of this world” (Schäfer 2004:332ff.). This reference is a key element in the construction of religious identity. It is in itself Janus faced, ambivalent, inasmuch as it bears two polar possibilities of development: fundamentalism and practical relativism. In the case of fundamentalism (Schäfer 2005), a group identifies its own position (religious, ethnic, social, political, etc.) with the meta-social and absolute entity, with the divine itself. Thus, fundamentalisms of different shapes all promote their particular and relative beliefs as having absolute and universal validity. This is the material that ethno-religious militancy is made of. On the other hand, the reference to an absolute and transcendent entity can induce believers to respect limits to human knowledge and pretense. Thus, an implicit and practical relativism is generated. As a consequence, the actors will respect other human beings simply for their being human. Both possibilities can be observed in the same conflictive context. We described one of them as a particularist attitude and the other as a cosmopolitan one. The former corresponds more to political and military power-broking, the latter to lifesaving and peace-making social strategies and the practice of problem-solving everyday-religion.

Second, religion tends to enter into a close relationship with ethnic identity. It serves to handle social conflicts by symbolic means. In traditional everyday religion the link between primordial religious and ethnic roots is being tacitly presupposed. Usually, in a traditional village nobody questions that the gods of the ancestors are the gods of the present, too — unless the traditional structure of the village suffers

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<sup>20</sup> On initiatives of religious leaders, see Dartel 2000.

deterioration by some economic or political change (Annis 1987). In particularist religious mobilization with ethno-nationalist interests, on the other hand, the identification of religious and ethnic origins is being politically constructed. The Serbian Orthodox identity, based on king Lazar, may serve as an example. The two forms of religious identities obviously do not represent the same practical logic and, therefore, do not trigger the same action. But they are similar in terms of the symbols they employ. This means that they are being perceived by the public as more or less the same religion. Thus, traditional religious practice can easily be coopted and manipulated by particularist practice.

Third, religion in general refers to an absolute, meta-social entity as well as to primordial (ethnic) roots of a certain group of people. It provides two key reference points for the personal identity of group members. This is very significant, if people are highly religious — be it because of external pressure or traditional habitus. These individuals construct their identities as dependent, at the same time, upon the absolute *and* upon the group's deep-rooted religious origins. The group as such turns out to guarantee the existence of the divine for its members, and the divine in turn legitimizes the existence and the goals of the group. Due to this kind of identity construction, the individual tends to value his or her own life below the divine and/or the community. This is basically the case in many non-western and non-individualist cultures, in religious orders or in some fundamentalist circles. Regarding the practical consequences of this basic attitude we only want to mention two extremes: if the individual identifies its community of reference as "humanity," the personal identity will turn out to be basically cosmopolitan, and it may be that the individual sacrifices his or her own life for other people in danger. If the community of reference is simply a particularist group, the personal identity will be basically fundamentalist, and the individual might sacrifice his or her life in a suicide bombing against those who are perceived as attacking the group.

Religion is deeply ambivalent. It is both, a base for "respect and coexistence and for violence and war" (Novacovic). Ethno-religious

violence in new wars polarizes people and makes this Janus face of religion visible.

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# MIT(H)RA(S) AND THE MYTHS OF THE SUN

DAVID H. SICK

## *Summary*

The extent of the connection between Indo-Iranian Mitra/Mithra and Roman Mithras has been vehemently debated for the last thirty years. One of the several problems in outlining the history of Mit(h)ra(s) has been the definition of the Iranian Mithra. In particular, the process by which he becomes a solar deity in the post-Avestan period needs clarification. This study considers the history of Mithra with regard to solar mythology; it describes a set of myths from the traditions of two neighbors to Iran — Greece and India. In this set of myths, the Sun is the guardian of contracts and cattle; the ritual of sacrifice relates these two wards, as cattle are victims in the ritual, which may be understood as a contract between gods and humans. With this mythic system recovered from the oldest Greek and Indic texts, the history of Iranian Mithra is reviewed with the intent of interpreting that god: he has assumed the role typically assigned to the Sun in a similar mythic complex. Themes in the myth and cult of Roman Mithras are suggested for comparison.

Just when it seemed the dark Mithraea of the Roman Empire had been permanently severed from the Iranian plateaus, when Roman Mithras was to be interpreted not by traditional Iranian or Zoroastrian religion but by a sophisticated knowledge of astronomy, new ideas of the Iranian qualities of Roman Mithras have come forward.<sup>1</sup> Maria Weiss, reviving the work of Johannes Hertel, argues that Iranian Mithra is properly to be understood as the night sky and thereby we can understand Roman Mithras.<sup>2</sup> She has, however, already been taken to

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<sup>1</sup> For a good review of the history of the god Mitra/Mithra/Mithras, see Rudolph 1979; this piece is actually a review of the articles contained in Hinnells 1975. A thorough summary of the question is also found in Beck 1984. See Hinnells 1994; Turcan 2000:169–75, 189–92; and Clauss 2001:xix–xxi, 3–8 for subsequent developments.

<sup>2</sup> Weiss 1998.

task for this interpretation,<sup>3</sup> perhaps having fallen into an old fault of Cumont, who expected too direct a connection between the Iranian and Roman contexts. Yet other Mithraic scholars have posited more general associations, realizing that the scarcity of evidence and the distance in time and space make direct connections unlikely and almost impossible to prove. R. L. Gordon looks for an Iranian foundation to the Roman cult, but this foundation would be strongly influenced by Graeco-Roman presumptions about what constitutes “Persian” myth and religion.<sup>4</sup> Roger Beck posits that multicultural nobles of Commagene fit the characteristics which would have been necessary for the initiators of the Roman cult.<sup>5</sup> As Beck admits, however, the Indo-Iranian situation is far from unambiguous, and therein lies the problem. If we do not know what traits of the Iranian god to search for in the Roman evidence, how can we confirm the relationship?

In this study, I would like to invert a commonly-asked question. It is the conventional view that post-Avestan Mithra is a solar deity, whereas the old Iranian Mithra is not.<sup>6</sup> Instead of asking once again how does Mithra become the Sun, we will address the reverse: how does the Sun become Mithra? In other words, let us start from the solar deity, as much as possible establish some of his qualities, and then turn to Iranian Mithra. We will use a comparative approach to undertake this task, delineating the most prominent characteristics of the Sun found in the oldest texts of Greece and India. Once the Greek and Indian situations have been resolved, we will approach the more complex Iranian material, using our Greek and Indic findings as an interpretative aid. Ultimately this study will not solve the perhaps

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<sup>3</sup> Breyer 2001 does not dispute that Mithras can be read as the starry heavens but views this manifestation as one of many. He is also sceptical of the attempt to interpret Roman Mithras with the Avesta. See also Turcan 2000:191–92 who alleges a textual problem in Porphyry, a key source for Weiss’s theory.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Beck 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Gershevitch 1975 established the conventional view; see also Widengren 1938:94–99; Malandra 1983:58; Boyce and Grenet 1991:479–82.



inscrutable history of Mit(h)ra(s), but I hope it will provide a more profitable approach to the evidence.

### *I. The Sun as Enforcer of Oaths and Contracts*

According to many cultures, the Sun is the deity who monitors human actions; in his daily travels over the earth, he is able to report to the other gods whether mortals are following the correct forms of conduct in general and whether they are keeping vows and contracts in particular. For example, the sun is the “eye” of the supreme being among the Semong Pygmies, Fuegians, and Bushmen of southern Africa as well as the Samoyeds of the Arctic regions.<sup>7</sup> Among the Greeks, Helios is occasionally termed the eye of Zeus.<sup>8</sup> In Homer the Sun is referred to as “he who sees and hears all.”<sup>9</sup> We see this epithet in practice in the third book of the *Iliad*, when Menelaus and Paris agree to single combat in order to settle the dispute over Helen. Since the two sides have agreed to end the war in accordance with the outcome of the duel, an oath must be taken to insure that all will abide by that outcome. In the prayer that accompanies the sacrifice, Agamemnon invokes the following gods to sanction the oath:

Father Zeus, ruling from Ida, greatest and most glorious, and Helios, who sees and hears all things, and the rivers and earth, and those below who punish the dead who have sworn a false oath, be witnesses and keep these oaths secure.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Eliade 1972:128.

<sup>8</sup> See Eur. *Frag.* 543 (ed. Nauck); Macr. 1.21.12; Preisendanz 1973–74, 2:89. Cook 1914, 1:196–97 has a discussion.

<sup>9</sup> *Il.* 3.277; *Od.* 9.109, 12.323: ὅς πάντ' ἐφορᾷ καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούει. See also *Il.* 14.343–44: οὐδ' ἄν νῶϊ διαδράκοι Ἥελιός περ, / οὐ τε καὶ δέξυτατον πέλεται φάος εἰσοράσθαι “not even Helios will see us whose light is brightest for seeing,” and *Homeric Hymn to Helios* 9–10: σμερνὸν δ' ὃ γε δέρκεται ὄσσοις χρυσέης ἐκ κόρυθος: “who frightfully glances with his eyes out from his golden helmet.”

<sup>10</sup> 3.276–80: Ζεῦ πάτερ, Ἰδηθεν μεδέων, κύδιστε, μέγιστε, / Ἥελιός θ', ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷ καὶ ἐπακούεις, / καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ γαῖα, καὶ οἱ ὑπένερθε καμόντας / ἀνθρώπους τίνυσθον, ὅτις κ' ἐπίορκον ὁμόσση, / ὑμεῖς μάρτυροι ἔστε, φυλάσσετε δ' ὅρκια πιστά. The Sun is also called upon to witness an oath in book 19 (258ff.), where Agamemnon vows that he had not slept with Briseis. We also find

The Sun's supposed ability to observe all activities on the earth as he travels across the sky makes him a perfect witness for this vow and helps explain why he has that particular standing epithet. In fact, the use of the verbs ὁράω and ἀκούω compounded with ἐπί is significant: the Sun does not just see and hear, but he *oversees* and *overhears*; his observations are not casual but purposed as he spies upon the people.

The solar deity's function as an enforcer of oaths figures in his most prominent role in the Homeric works — the antagonist to the hero and his crew on the island of Thrinakia in *Odyssey* 12. This is the episode which is cited in the proem of the epic (1.7–9) as the cause of the deaths of Odysseus' companions. Odysseus only consents to land the ship on that island on the condition that his crew mates agree not to harm the herds of the Sun which are pastured there. In fact, he makes them swear a formal oath which he dictates:

But come now vow to me a strong oath! If we should find any herd of cattle or large flock, may no one kill either cow or sheep by some evil reckless deed.<sup>11</sup>

We should not make too little of this “strong oath” placed here in the tale of the cattle of the Sun. The use of ἀτασθαλίας “reckless deeds” at line 300 recalls the proem, where we were told that the companions died because of their “own reckless deeds” (1.7).<sup>12</sup> It is at this point in

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Helios actively pursuing an informant role in Demodocus' story about the infidelity of Aphrodite at *Od.* 13.271 and 302. Here the Sun reports to Hephaistos that his wife Aphrodite has been sleeping with Ares.

<sup>11</sup> 12.298–301: ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ μοι πάντες ὁμόσσατε καρτερὸν ὄρκον, / εἴ κέ τιν' ἡ ἐβόων ἀγέλην ἢ πῶϋ μὲγ' οἴων / εὖρωμεν, μὴ ποῦ τις ἀτασθαλίῃσι κακῆσιν / ἢ βοῦν ἢ ἐ τι μῆλον ἀποκτάνῃ·

<sup>12</sup> Some commentators have noticed the importance of this oath to the correct reading of the episode. Both Reinhardt 1996:100 and Schadewaldt 1970, 1:93–105 believe the presence of the oath make this episode a moral test more than any of the other adventures. As Schadewaldt explains (98), “Wenn sie die Rinder, nachdem sie diesen Eid geschworen haben, später dann doch verletzen, so verletzen sie sie nun nicht mehr aus menschlicher Schwachheit in harter Not, sondern als Eidbrüchige: in ‘bösen Verblendungen’ (ἀτασθαλίῃσι κακῆσιν).” Also Andersen 1973, who accepts the moral significance of the oath but disputes Schadewaldt's belief that the moralistic tone must come from a later poet.

the narrative that we learn of the outcome foreshadowed in the proem. The crimes of the crew consist not merely of killing a herd of cattle belonging to a god but also in breaking an oath. Since the god who enforces oaths is also the owner of these herds, there is little hope of escaping punishment. The poet reminds his listeners a few lines later (322–23) of the dire consequences of breaking the oath. There he marks the sun god with his standing epithet and the adjective δεινός “terrible”:

These are the cattle and fat flocks of the terrible god Helios, who sees and hears all.<sup>13</sup>

In other words: these are the cattle of an awesome god; he will see your actions and hear your falsehoods. Beware!

The Sun also acts as informant of the gods in the Vedas. The sun god Sūrya is called the eye of Mitra,<sup>14</sup> whose function seems to be related to the enforcement of contracts, truths, and right action, although many of these functions have been usurped by his dvandva partner Varuṇa. Thus, Mitra-Varuṇa use Sūrya’s powers of perception in their disciplining of contract breakers and other sinners. At RV 6.51, the Sun (Sūra), who is called the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa in verse one, marks out the good and bad deeds of mortals in verse two.<sup>15</sup> Again, at RV 7.62.2 the rising Sun (Sūrya) is asked to declare to Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, and Agni that the petitioners are free from sin.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> δεινοῦ γὰρ θεοῦ αἶδε βόες καὶ ἔφια μῆλα, / Ἡελίου δς πάντ’ ἐφορᾷ καὶ πάντ’ ἐπακούει.

<sup>14</sup> RV 1.115.1; 6.51.1; 7.61.1; 7.63.1; 10.37.1. Sūrya, like Helios, is the beholder of all: 1.50.6. See Srivastava 1972:82–83.

<sup>15</sup> 6.51.2: *ṛjū mārteṣu vṛjinā ca pāsyaṇn abhī caṣṭe sūro aryā évān* // “Seeing the straight and the crooked (deeds) among mortals, the sun god watches over the ways of the pious man.”

<sup>16</sup> *sá sūrya prāti puró na úd gā ebhīh stómebhir etaṣébhir évaiḥ / prá no mitráya váruṇāya vocó ’nāgasó aryamné agnáye ca* // “May you, Sūrya, rise again before us with these hymns by the brilliant ways. May you declare us free from sin to Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, and Agni.” He also observes the good and evil actions of mortals for Mitra and Varuṇa in 7.60.2.

A relationship between the Sun and binding forms of speech is also found in the myth of the Paṇis. I have considered this myth's associations with solar mythology and Roman Mithras in an earlier study but will review it here briefly.<sup>17</sup> The Paṇis are a group of demonic beings who withhold the heavenly, solar cattle from their rightful Aryan owners. When confronted by the gods, the demons tell the divine messenger Saramā that they will offer Indra a contract (*mitrá-*) if he comes out to meet them—a contract by which he will become the cowherd of the Paṇis' cows (10.108.3). Of course, the contract is turned down, for it has been suggested in an hybristic manner. The cows are not the Paṇis' to contract out to anyone: they are the rightful possession of the Aryan gods. As Bruce Lincoln points out, cattle, being possessions of the gods, are given to mortals with the understanding that they will return to the gods through sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> Cattle are the gods' to give and contracts are the Sun's to enforce. Both cattle and the sun are restrained by the evil beings' own actions, and thus a contract over cattle is not possible. For the Paṇis to propose a contract with Indra for the tending of cattle which should rightly belong to him in the first place is a perversion of the normal religion.

## *II. Cattle and the Sun*

As is evident from the previous discussion of the Sun and contracts, one of the most prominent roles of the solar deity in Greece and India is that of pastor, that is, pastor in its most basic sense of “guardian of the flocks.” In the Indic and Greek examples these flocks or herds are generally made up of cattle (*bovidae*). In order to describe this relationship between cattle and the Sun more specifically, let us turn first to the abundance of data found in Indic myth. There are numerous Vedic deities which have been called sun-gods by various scholars at

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<sup>17</sup> Sick 1996a, building on the work of Venkatasubbiah 1965:127–28, and Srinivasan 1979:84–89. The myth of the Paṇis is given most fully at RV 10.108. Other important verses include: 1.32.12; 1.61.10; 1.62.4–6; 5.30.4; 6.17.1; 6.60.2; 10.48.2; 10.89.7; 10.113.4–5.

<sup>18</sup> Lincoln 1981:69. See especially figure four, the Indo-Iranian priestly cycle.

various times.<sup>19</sup> Many of these attributions were inspired by the solar mythologists of the nineteenth century, but, even so, attributes of at least two of these gods can be used to connect the cattle to the Sun. Sūrya, the god whose name goes back to the Proto-Indo-European term for the sun (\*sāwel),<sup>20</sup> has several pastoral associations: he is referred to as a herdsman;<sup>21</sup> his rays are called metaphorically his cows,<sup>22</sup> and the dawn, from whom Sūrya is born, is theriomorphized as a cow, thus making Sūrya himself her calf.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Pūṣan, who is more definitely a pastoral god in the Vedas,<sup>24</sup> has several attributes which can be termed solar. He carries a goad and is called *paśupā-*, “protector of cattle”;<sup>25</sup> yet the epithet *āghṛṇi-*, “glowing with heat,” is often applied to him as well, and he is connected with several other phenomena of light.<sup>26</sup> He travels on the paths between heaven and

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the various sun gods in the Vedas, see Srivastava 1972:41–176; Dass 1984:23–68; and Pandey 1971:1–42. Although these authors are perhaps over-eager in their designation of various gods as sun-gods, they are at least comprehensive in their citation of the pertinent passages.

<sup>20</sup> \*sāwel in Pokorny 1949–1969, and Mann 1984–1987.

<sup>21</sup> For Sūrya as herdsman, see RV 1.164.31, 7.60.2.

<sup>22</sup> For the rays of the sun as cattle, see 1.62.5; 1.164.7; 2.14.3; 6.60.2; 7.9.4.

<sup>23</sup> For the sun-calf associations, see 1.164.9; 1.164.27–28; for dawn-cow associations, see 1.62.3–5; 1.164.9; 1.164.17; 1.164.26–28; 3.30.14; 4.1.13–16; 4.3.11; 4.5.9; 4.44.1; 6.17.5–6; 6.39.2–3; 6.60.2; 7.79.2; 7.90.4; 8.64.8; 10.35.4; 10.67.4. For sun-cow associations, see 1.62.3–5; 1.83.5; 1.93.4; 2.19.3; 2.24.3–4; 3.39.5–6; 4.1.14–16; 6.17.5–6; 6.60.2; 10.111.3; 10.189.1. I should point out that it is not always clear whether the cattle referred to in a particular verse are cows of the sun, the dawn, or rays of one or the other.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of Pūṣan’s pastoral aspects, see Atkins 1941:14–16, and Dandekar 1979:91–117.

<sup>25</sup> For the goad, see 6.53.9. For Pūṣan as herdsman, see 6.53.9; 6.54.5–7; 6.58.2; 10.139.1; he is called *paśupā-* in the last of these verses. Srivastava 1972 treats the question at 106–7.

<sup>26</sup> For *āghṛṇi-* applied to Pūṣan, see 1.23.13–14; 1.138.4; 3.62.7; 6.48.16; 6.53.3, 8, 9; 6.55.1, 3; 7.40.6; 8.4.17, 18; 9.67.12; 10.17.5. For Pūṣan’s other luminescent characteristics, see 6.48.17; 6.56.3; 6.58.1; 10.64.3.

earth and sees all from his position in the heavens.<sup>27</sup> It should also be pointed out that he has a role in the marriage of Sūryā, the sun maiden.<sup>28</sup>

These kinds of metaphorical connections between cattle and the Sun can be found in several mythic cycles of the Ṛg Veda. The first tradition is recounted most fully in hymn 1.164. Here the dawn as a cow is impregnated by the sky god Dyaus (1.164.8), and she gives birth to the Sun as her calf. The hymn's constant use of metaphors and similes leaves the exact meaning subject to dispute, but the alternation between language referring to celestial entities and language referring to bovine entities is definite. Generally, the two types of language vary between the verses, but both seem to be employed in a few verses, as in verse seven:

Let him here who has seen proclaim where the track of that lovely bird has been set down. From its (the bird's) head the cows draw milk; while wearing a covering they have drunk water with the foot.<sup>29</sup>

The interpretation of this verse is influenced by a traditional Vedic theory explaining rainfall. The lovely bird (*vāmasya vēḥ*) seems to be the sun as it moves across the sky. The rays of the sun are its cows which reach down from heaven and take water with their foot (feet?) as if drinking up the waters on the earth. The water is perhaps referred to as milk because of the nourishment it provides. When the cows/rays have absorbed this water, they become covered with clouds. This theory of rain, cows, and the sun is recounted in Sāyaṇa's commentary to the verse and confirmed by modern commentators.<sup>30</sup>

There is another combination of pastoral and celestial motifs in verse 31 of the same hymn:

<sup>27</sup> Pūṣan's place in the heavens is described in 2.40.4 and 10.17.6. For his role as an observer of all, see 1.89.5; 2.40.5; 3.62.9; 6.58.2; 10.139.1–2.

<sup>28</sup> The exact nature of this participation is difficult to determine. See Atkins 1941:9–11.

<sup>29</sup> *ihā bravītu yā īm aṅgā védāsyā vāmasya nīhitam padām vēḥ / śīrṣṇāḥ kṣīrām duhrate gāvo asya vavṛim vāsānā udakām padāpuḥ //*

<sup>30</sup> See W.N. Brown 1968:205 as well as Geldner's commentary.

I have seen the cowherd who does not fall down, rolling along the pathways toward and beyond. Clothing himself with concentric yet spreading (rays?), he keeps revolving among the worlds.<sup>31</sup>

Here again the sun is not mentioned specifically, but the cowherd who does not descend and who moves among the worlds seems to be the Sun, especially since Sūrya is directly called a cowherd in RV 7.60.2 and is said to watch over all creatures like a herd in 7.60.3.<sup>32</sup>

The myth of the Paṇis is also a major vehicle for associations between cattle and the sun in the Vedas. To repeat, the cows which the Paṇis withhold are not simply cows in the field but are the cosmic, solar cows. Note RV 5.45.2, where the cows emerge from the Paṇis' pen (*ūrvā*-):

The sun let loose its light like wealth; the mother of cows came out from the cow-pen, knowing; the rivers, with devouring currents, flow over the dry lands; the sky holds firm like a well-fixed post.<sup>33</sup>

Given the frequent equation of cattle and the sun, the sun and the mother of cows in the above verse may be read as synonymous; both emerge from the Paṇis' enclosure.

In turning to the Greek material, we find that mythic cattle are not simply cud-chewing bovines there either. On the island of Thrinakia, the sun god Helios keeps seven herds of cattle, with fifty head in each herd; the numbers work nicely, since seven herds, each with fifty

<sup>31</sup> *āpaśyaṃ gopām ānīpadyamānam ā ca pārā ca pathībhiś cārāntam / sā sadhrīcīḥ sā vīśucīr vāsāna ā varīvarti bhūvaneṣv antāḥ* // The application of rays to *sadhrīcīḥ* and *vīśucīr* comes from W.N. Brown.

<sup>32</sup> 7.60.2: *eṣā syā mitrāvaruṇā nṛcākṣā ubhé úd eti sūryo abhī jmán / vīśvasya sthātūr jāgataś ca gopā* . . . "This Sun, O Mitra-Varuṇa, the watcher of mortals both (living and dead), rises toward the earth, the cowherd of all that stands and moves. . . ." 7.60.3: . . . *sūryaṃ . . . yó yūthéva jānimā ni cāṣṭe* // "Sūrya, . . . who watches the living creatures as if a herd. . . ."

<sup>33</sup> *vī sūryo amātiṃ nā śrīyaṃ sād ōrvād gāvām mātā jānatī gāt / dhānvarṇaso nadyāḥ khādoarṇā sthūneva sūmitā dṛmḥata dyaúḥ* // The translation of the verse is difficult. I follow Geldner for the most part. See also RV 2.19.3; for a discussion, Sick 1996a:270–72; Venkatasubbiah 1965:120–33; Thieme 1949:18; and Srinivasan 1979:85.

members, totals 350 cattle — the number of days in the lunar calendar, a fact which the ancients themselves recognized.<sup>34</sup> It is intriguing that in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, Hermes steals only fifty cattle from the herds of the gods — those which belong to Apollo alone.<sup>35</sup> This number would amount to one herd on Thrinakia. It is probably not a coincidence that the numbers correspond, whether owing to the association of the lunar calendar or to a general tradition of the gods maintaining a certain number of cattle in their herds.

Secondly, we should note that the cattle in the two Homeric tales are termed “immortal.” The immortality with which they are endowed is of a peculiar kind, however. In the *Odyssey* the poet claims that they neither “decay” (φθινύθουσι) nor give birth (12.130–31). In the Homeric hymn, the cattle are directly called ἄμβροτοι “immortal,”<sup>36</sup> but it is obviously not the case that the cattle are inviolable or deathless, since some are killed. Perhaps it would be best to describe them as “anti-Tithonian”; unlike Tithonos, who grew old but never died, they never grow old but can die. This anti-Tithonian quality has interesting and consistent consequences for the sacrifices reported in the myths, and we will discuss them below.

A connection between cattle and the sun can be documented in Greek myth beyond Homer. A.B. Cook lists numerous other examples of herds of the Sun from the ancient sources.<sup>37</sup> According to Apollodorus (1.6), there was another herd of cattle which belonged to Helios in Erytheia; this one was raided by the giant Alcyoneus. He also kept a herd at Gortyna on Crete.<sup>38</sup> According to Herodotus, Helios had still another herd in Apollonia, although it is unclear whether this was

<sup>34</sup> *Od.* 12.129–30; see Eustathius (Weigel, ed. 1825–60) *ad locum*. Stanford 1959, 1:410.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *HHH* 74, 193; for a discussion of the connections between the *Odyssey* and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, see Shelmerdine 1986.

<sup>36</sup> *HHH* 71; see especially Vernant 1989:165; also Kahn 1978:48–50; N. O. Brown 1947:140; Burkert 1984:842; and Clay 1989:113.

<sup>37</sup> Cook 1914, 1:410–12.

<sup>38</sup> See Servius' comment at Verg. *Ecl.* 6.60.



a herd of cattle or a flock of sheep.<sup>39</sup> It also seems fairly clear that the sun has some association with the cattle which Herakles takes from Geryon.<sup>40</sup>

Two of Helios' children also show a penchant for cattle. Helios' daughter Pasiphae was impregnated by a bull while disguised as a cow and subsequently gave birth to the half-human, half-bovine Minotaur.<sup>41</sup> Augeas, another child of the Sun, had his gigantic cattle-stable cleaned by Herakles in the sixth labor of that hero.<sup>42</sup> His name itself, Ἀυγείας, is derived from αὐγή "light of the sun, ray, beam." In addition to the account of Herakles' labors in Apollodorus, an extended but fragmentary version of the story of Augeas is found in the 25th idyll of Theocritus. The poem explains that Helios has bestowed on King Augeas of Elis the privilege of keeping the greatest herds among mortals; he has even placed twelve of his own sacred cattle among Augeas' vast herds. The cattle are spread all over this region of the Peloponnese.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps what is most striking about these cattle is the way the poet describes the herds' movements across the pastures. He uses celestial imagery:

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<sup>39</sup> Hdt. 9.93.1: he only refers to them as ἱρὰ ἡλίου πρόβατα. πρόβατον can refer to either cattle (*bovidae*) or sheep. Homer uses it mainly to refer to cattle. The Attic prose authors and tragedians mainly use it for sheep. Herodotus uses both meanings: sheep, Hdt. 1.133, 8.137; and cattle, Hdt. 2.41, 4.61.

<sup>40</sup> For Herakles and Geryon, see Hes. *Th.* 287ff., 981ff.; Eur. *HF* 422ff; Apollodorus 1.6.1, 2.5.10. The episode was the subject of an epic poem by the sixth century Sicilian poet Stesichorus. Unfortunately it survives only in fragments. See Robertson 1969; Page 1973; Brommer 1986:41–44.

<sup>41</sup> For Pasiphae, see Apollod. 1.9.1, 3.1.2; Apollonius Rhodius 3.999; Paus. 5.25.9; Ov. *Met.* 9.735–37, *Ars* 1.289–326, and numerous others.

<sup>42</sup> Apollod. 2.5. Elements of the myth of Augeas can be traced back to Homer. In book eleven of the *Iliad* the garrulous Nestor recounts tales of his youth when he was involved in cattle-raids and wars against the Eleans, of whom Augeas is named as king. Herakles too has a part in the story, but he seems to be on the side of the Eleans. See 11.670ff. For other sources on Augeas, see Diodorus Siculus 4.33 and Paus. 5.1.9, although the latter author does not believe that Augeas was the child of the Sun. For more on Augeas, see Brommer 1986:29–30.

<sup>43</sup> See lines 7–26, 129–37.

When Helios turned his horses toward the netherworld and brought on evening, then the rich herds came round again, returning from the pasture looking for the pens and stalls. Then came thousands upon thousands of cattle just as watery clouds.<sup>44</sup>

In this passage the poet comes quite close to making the cows a celestial or meteorological entity. He puts them in correlative relationship with the sun by using the contrasting particles μέν and δέ. Moreover, he uses the verb ἐπέρχομαι to relate their movements. This verb is also used to denote the turning of the seasons (e.g., *Od.* 2.107). Finally, he likens the cows to watery clouds. The cows of Augeas seem to resemble the celestial cows of India which follow the Sun as their herdsman and which are closely connected to the release of the primordial waters by Indra.

This passage also discloses a possible explanation from nature for the connection between cattle and the sun found in myth. Cattle, like the sun, have natural, observable characteristics. Any good dairy farmer knows that cattle will return on their own from the field every evening at sundown, since they need to be milked and they “know” that the stables will provide them with food, water, and shelter for the night. The stables quickly become associated with the food, shelter, and milking they receive there. Cattle, as any domesticated and hence trainable animal, will react to stimuli, and in this instance, the time of day, that is the position of the sun in the sky, may be the stimulus which spurs the herds to return to their stables. At a certain time of day, the cattle return to the stables in order to receive the benefits there. It might then be natural to connect the movements of cattle to movements of the sun across the sky, and in turn, the predictable movements of cattle could be used to reckon the time of day. Indeed, there is an expression in Homeric Greek to indicate the time of day when oxen are usually released from their yokes or some other constraining device. The

<sup>44</sup> Ἡέλιος μέν ἔπειτα ποτὶ ζόφον ἔτραπεν ἵππους / δείελον ἡμαρ ἄγων τά δ' ἐπῆλυθε πίονα μῆλα / ἐκ βοτάνης ἀνιόντα μετ' αὐλία τε σηκούς τε. / αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα βόες μάλα μυρία ἄλλαι ἐπ' ἄλλαις / ἐρχόμεναι φαίνονθ' ὥσεϊ νέφη ὕδατόεντα (85–89).

expression runs: ἥμος δ' ἡέλιος μετανίσσεται βουλυτόνδε "when the sun passes into the ox-loosening point." So there is indeed a link in Greek thought between cattle, the sun, and time reckoning.<sup>45</sup> Because these are all natural, predictable phenomena, the links between cattle and the sun could have arisen independently in Greece and India and not necessarily as a result of the common Indo-European heritage of the two peoples.<sup>46</sup>

### *III. The Sun and Sacrifice*

It is possible to interpret the mythic themes we have outlined thus far by describing a third aspect of solar mythology. The Sun is the enforcer of contracts and the guardian of herds: these two characteristics are linked through the common ritual of sacrifice. The role of the cattle as victims in the sacrifice is obvious; the contractual element of sacrifice has also been well documented. Sacrifice is a means by which mortals establish a right relationship with the gods. By pleasing the gods through the gifts of sacrifice, mortals in turn receive good fortune from the gods or at least ward off misfortune. The classic Latin phrase *do ut des*, "I give so that you may give," clearly denotes a contractual relationship in sacrifice, and more significantly, the conclusions reached by Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss in their important work on the nature of ancient sacrifice fit well with the interconnections between sacrifice and contract:

Dans tout sacrifice, il y a un acte d'abnégation, puisque le sacrificant se prive et donne. . . Mais cette abnégation et cette soumission ne sont pas sans un retour égoïste. . . C'est que, s'il (le sacrificant) donne, c'est en partie pour recevoir. . . Au fond, il n'y a peut-être pas de sacrifice qui n'ait quelque chose de contractuel.

<sup>45</sup> See *Il*.16.779 or *Od*.9.58. For a discussion, see Radin 1988. Frame 1978:56–57, 164–66 has another interpretation of the meaning of βουλυτόνδε, taking λυ- from λούω 'wash' rather than λύω 'loose.' The question concerns the second upsilon and whether or not its length is determinative.

<sup>46</sup> See Sick 1996b for a complete treatment of the possible Indo-European origins of the associations of cattle and the sun in these myths.

Les deux parties en présence échanent leurs services et chacune y trouve son compte.<sup>47</sup>

It is rather facile but worth noting that the major oaths of the *Iliad* (3.276ff., 19.258ff), those to which Helios is called as witness, are marked by sacrifice. In the *Odyssey*, in the episode on Thrinakia, the contractual relationship of the sacrifice fails, since the crew sacrifices cattle which belong to the deity from the outset. Although ordered to avoid the cattle, the crew attempts to subvert this command and their own oath by sacrificing the cattle to the gods and promising to build a temple to Helios. They attempt thereby to propitiate Helios and escape the consequences of harming the cattle (12.343, 347). The sacrifice, however, is a disaster. The cattle have to be driven off and surrounded or restrained,<sup>48</sup> while animals properly designated for sacrifice are supposed to give their lives willingly.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, since none of the other elements necessary for sacrifice are available on the island, the crew must make do with substitutes. A proper sacrifice would require offerings of barley or millet and libations of wine. In place of these products, the crew must use oak leaves and water. As Vidal-Naquet notes, “un produit ‘naturel’ remplace donc un produit de la culture . . . la façon même dont le sacrifice est conduit en fait donc un anti-

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<sup>47</sup> Hubert and Mauss 1899:135, also 105–16. See also Heesterman 1959:242–45, where he shows that the *dákṣinā* is a gift which establishes a binding relationship between the giver and the recipient.

<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that Agamemnon’s sacrifice in *Il.* 2 is also an ineffectual sacrifice, in that he does not obtain the quick end to the war that he seeks. In fact, after this sacrifice the tide of the war turns against the Greeks; Reinhardt 1961:94 notes that Agamemnon’s sacrifice is flawed since it is lacking a libation of wine.

<sup>49</sup> See Nestor’s sacrifice of a heifer to Athena (*Od.* 3.417–72) and Eumaios’ sacrifice of a pig (*Od.* 14.414–56) for instances where the animal victim is more compliant and treated with more reverence. In each instance, the hairs of the head of the victim are cut and thrown into the fire; then the animal is stunned by a blow to the head, and finally, only after these preliminaries, is the throat slit. For a review of the standard elements in a Homeric sacrifice, see Reinhardt 1996:83–95; Rudhardt 1958:253–57; and Kadletz 1984:99–105.

sacrifice.”<sup>50</sup> The sacrifice itself turns into little more than uncivilized slaughter and takes on the air of irreligion, ending with the flesh of the anti-Tithonian, immortal cattle lowing on the spits: *ἔρπον μὲν ῥινοί, κρέα δ’ ἄμφ’ ὀβελοῖσι μεμύκει* (12.395). It was inevitably ineffectual because of the conflict between the ritual requirements and the character of the participants: it was a contract between contract breakers and the god of solemn agreements.

Failure in sacrifice also figures prominently in the Vedic material on cattle and the sun. Hitherto we have defined the Paṇis as demons and non-Aryans. This definition is correct, but what is it about the nature of these mythical beings that separates them from the Aryans? The Paṇis are not Aryans because they do not participate in a constituting ritual of Vedic society. By definition, a Paṇi is one who withholds the *dákṣinā*, the donation by which the priests acquire the elements of the sacrifice.<sup>51</sup> A key verse is RV 8.97.2:

This cow and horse which you, o Indra, have fixed as an immutable portion for the sacrificer, the (Soma) presser, the one who contributes the *dákṣinā*, these (the cows and horses) bestow upon him (the sacrificer), not upon the Paṇi.<sup>52</sup>

Here again we see Indra in his role as opponent of the Paṇis, and we learn for whom the treasure of the Paṇis was intended — the one who contributes the *dákṣinā*, the sacrificer, thus confirming that the Paṇis themselves do not participate in the sacrifice. This refusal to sacrifice amplifies the obstacle posed by the Paṇis’ improper possession of the cattle. As Srinivasan points out, cattle are necessary in at least two

<sup>50</sup> Vidal-Naquet 1970:1288–89. See also Vernant 1989:166, where he comments on the oak as a symbol of the absence of civilization, e.g., the eating of acorns by the “primitive” Arcadians. The scene is also analyzed by Reinhardt 1996:95, who notes the differences from a standard Homeric sacrifice.

<sup>51</sup> See Srinivasan 1979:98–100, Schmidt 1968:209–11; Keith and Macdonnell 1964, 1:471–73, and Kapadia 1962. Kapadia’s article is useful for its full listing of RV citations concerning the Paṇis. For the *dákṣinā*, see Heesterman 1959.

<sup>52</sup> *yám indra dadhiṣé tvám áśvaṃ gām bhāgām ávyayam / yájamāne sunvatí dákṣināvatí tásmin táṃ dhehi mǎ paṇaú* // I am following Geldner’s interpretation of *ávyaya-* as *a + vyaya-* ‘without change’; Geldner follows Sāyaṇa.

ways for Vedic sacrifice: first, cattle are frequently used as payment of the *dákṣinā*, and secondly, cattle provide the milk and butter which compose the elements of oblation in the sacrifice. The Paṇis, by keeping the cattle from the priests, have stopped the Vedic sacrifice.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, it is those who properly conduct the offices of ritual and sacrifice who aid Indra in the quest for the cows. Numerous priests ally themselves with Indra in the battle, and as a result of this allegiance they acquire the elements of the sacrifice from the defeated Paṇis. First, Br̥haspati, the Aṅgirasas, the Navagvas, and Ṛṣis, using their hymns and religious power, help Indra to split open the structure which confines the stolen cows. The priests' words have power, as opposed to the Paṇis' words which are weak.<sup>54</sup> Then, after the battle, the priests regain their rightful position as the contractees of the elements of the sacrifice: "the Aṅgirasas . . . acquired all the wealth of the Paṇis" (1.83.4).<sup>55</sup>

#### IV. Mithra and the Sun

Having reviewed the pertinent material from the solar mythology of Greece and India, we now turn to the Iranian evidence in order to document similar qualities in Mithra and then posit how he might have subsumed responsibilities commonly taken up by the solar deity. We must start from what we know definitely about Iranian Mithra, which, in truth, is not much. We are perhaps safe to start from Antoine Meillet's seminal article "Le dieu Indo-Iranian Mitra."<sup>56</sup> Meillet put forward the idea that Indo-Iranian Mitra's basic nature was that of a

<sup>53</sup> Srinivasan 1979:116–24. She goes so far as to suggest that the myth may represent the historical relationship between a Vedic priest and a Paṇi.

<sup>54</sup> 10.108.6. See Srinivasan 1973:49–52. For the priests' role in the conquering of the Paṇis, see also 1.62.2–3, 5; 2.11.20; 2.14.3; 2.15.8; 2.24.4; 4.1.14; 4.3.11; 4.16.8; 4.50.4–6; 5.29.12; 5.45.7–8; 6.17.6; 8.14.8; 10.61.10; 10.67.4; 10.68.8.

<sup>55</sup> . . . *āṅgirāḥ* . . . *sārvam paṇēḥ sām avidanta bhójanam* . . . // I am following Grassmann's interpretation of *sām avidanta* found in his *Wörterbuch*. See RV 1.62.2; 1.83.5; 1.132.3; 3.31.11; 4.50.4–6; 10.61.10–12 for further examples of priests' acquiring the Paṇis' wealth.

<sup>56</sup> Meillet 1907, also Gershevitch 1959:26–35, and Malandra 1983:9, 55–58.

god of contract, the nature of the god being reflected in the meaning of the term *mitrá-/mithra* in Sanskrit and Avestan. We have, of course, already noted that it is often the duty of the solar deity to enforce contracts, oaths, and other binding forms of speech. So, a basic link between the spheres of influence of the Sun and Mithra is easily demonstrable; yet the link is stronger than a simple overlap of duties. Iranian Mithra tends to fulfill his responsibilities in a manner comparable to and in association with the Sun, which is a distinct deity in Avestan and generally referred to as *Hwarəxshaēta*, although that god is not the subject of an extensive mythology.<sup>57</sup>

A confluence of sun and contract can be seen within the Mithra Yašt (Yašt 10), where Mithra seems to move across the entire earth, from one end to the other, observing everything (10.95). He appears at the break of day like the sun:

10.13 (Mithra) who is the first supernatural god to rise across the Harā, in front of the immortal, swift-horsed Sun, who is the first to seize the beautiful mountain peaks adorned with gold; from there he, the most mighty, surveys the whole land inhabited by the Iranians.<sup>58</sup>

We learn from other verses of the poem (49–51) that Mithra not only rises over Mt. Harā but he actually lives there, looking over the Iranian plains, in a dwelling which never knows darkness and which has been built by the gods with the help of the Sun. Mithra also drives a chariot which is described as white, radiant, and shining; it is pulled by shadowless horses (10.68). Finally, Mithra himself seems to generate his own light: he shines like the star *Tištrya* or the Moon (10.143). One can begin to see how these movements and luminous qualities could lead to a later identification of Mithra with the sun; in fact, it is likely that we are here looking at the beginnings of the transformation. The mechanism for enforcement of contracts drives the identification of Mithra with the sun.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Jacobs 1991:55; Boyce and Grenet 1991:479.

<sup>58</sup> Translation from Malandra 1983:60.

<sup>59</sup> Others have made this suggestion; I develop it more thoroughly. See Gershevitch 1959:39–40; 1975:69–70, 75; Lommel 1962:366; Boyce and Grenet 1991:482.

In the Mithra Yašt, it is Mithra, in his role as the god of contract, who observes, reports, and, when necessary, corrects the habits of mortals. He

has 1,000 ears ... 10,000 eyes ... (and) is sleepless ... he is undecivable, knows all, (and) has 10,000 spies ... he deals out 10,000 blows ... he espies the covenant breaker and the one false to the covenant.<sup>60</sup>

These amazing powers of observation are analogous to those attributed to the Sun in other cultures. They obviously relate here, however, to Mithra's role as a god of contract, in that they allow him to carry out his function as an enforcer. He has assumed the Sun's traditional role as informant of the gods.

The assumption of solar qualities by Mithra can be marked out with a little more detail. In several Yasnas outside the Gāthās, the sun is called the eye of Ahura Mazdā, the supreme deity of Zoroastrianism.<sup>61</sup> We may posit that the designation of the sun as the eye of Ahura Mazdā as opposed to the eye of Mithra is the result of a Zoroastrian reform.<sup>62</sup> Remember that Sūrya is the eye of Mitra in Vedic.<sup>63</sup> Given the occurrence of the "eye of" statements in both Vedic and Avestan, the solar god and Mitra/Mithra must have been associated at an early stage in Indo-Iranian religion. It would have been a small step from the designation of the sun as the eye of Mitra/Mithra to identifying Mithra as the sun directly. The association between the two gods continued until Mithra became directly identified as the sun at a time after the

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<sup>60</sup> The translation is Malandra's. See respectively Yašt 10.7, 10.27, 10.82. For a further discussion, see Gershevitch 1959:29–30; Malandra 1983:56–57.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Yasna 1.11, 3.13, 4.16, etc.

<sup>62</sup> Work by Jean Kellens has called into question the conventional reconstruction of the history of Iranian religion. He considers unhelpful the assumption of an enlightened prophet "Zarathustra" who reformed the traditional religion. I think we can speak of a reform without identifying a personal agent. My own references to Zarathustra are to the character in Avestan texts. The collection *Essays on Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism* (Kellens 2000) provides a good summary of his ideas.

<sup>63</sup> As pointed out by Gershevitch 1975:89 n.11, the sun's designation as the eye of Ahura Mazdā may have resulted from the removal of Mithra as his dvandva partner, given that Mitra and Varuṇa are dvandva partners in Vedic.



inception of the Gāthās, Yasnas, and Yašts. The physical reality of the sun crossing the sky and watching over human actions could easily have superseded the force of an abstract god of contract.

A few of the classical sources on Persian religion would also support the claim of a synthesis of contract and sun, in that they describe the Sun, or Mithra as the Sun, as a witness to oaths or a proctor of other forms of ethical conduct. Let us begin with a passage from Herodotus, since his early date will allow us to avoid the later confusions with Roman Mithras:

They (the Persians) consider lying to be the most shameful deed . . . any citizen who has leprosy or the white sickness, they exile from the city and he does not associate with the other Persians. They say that these things happen since he has sinned against the Sun.<sup>64</sup>

Herodotus does not specifically say that the sin against the Sun involves lying, but since the chapter itself is organized under the general statement about lying, the sins which are cited afterwards should logically be taken as categories of this major heading. Furthermore, given what we know about the Persians' common representation of the Lie as the embodiment of evil, the sin against the Sun would need to fall under the category of Lying in some way. There are of course a limited number of ways one might sin against the Sun, and it seems likely that the Sun is as much an observer of a misdeed as an actual sufferer of a wrong. In any event, here we have a source from the Achaemenid era which shows the Sun enforcing penalties against human misdeeds, and it is very likely that the misdeeds involved would be related to lying. From the Mithra Yašt we know that Mithra was understood as the god who enforced covenants and opposed the Lie. In Herodotus' time, either Mithra and the Sun are synonymous, and thus we find the similarity in divine duty between the Sun in Herodotus and Mithras in the Yašt, or the Sun is still operating independently in his traditional

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<sup>64</sup> 1.138: αἰσχιστον δὲ αὐτοῖσι τὸ ψεύδεσθαι νενόμισται . . . ὃς ἂν δὲ τῶν ἀστῶν λέπρην ἢ λεύκην ἔχῃ, ἐς πόλιν οὗτος οὐ κατέρχεται οὐδὲ συμμίσγεται τοῖσι ἄλλοισι Πέρησι· φασι δὲ μὲν ἐς τὸν ἥλιον ἁμαρτόντα τι ταῦτα ἔχειν.

role, since Mithra himself is not mentioned in this passage. In fact, elsewhere (1.131.3) Herodotus believes Μίτρα to be a goddess.<sup>65</sup>

There are also two later classical sources which show the Sun along with Mithra ensuring the truth or honesty of human actions. In Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, Darius III demands an oath of allegiance from one of the eunuchs who work in his chambers. He asks the eunuch to make a vow before the "great light of Mithra and the right hand of the king."<sup>66</sup> Curtius Rufus, who also tells the story of the fall of the Achaemenids, reports that Darius III invoked Mithras, the Sun, and the Eternal Fire to inspire his troops to bravery. The king might have chosen those holy entities since they would witness the actions of the troops and punish cowardice.<sup>67</sup> In these later accounts from the Roman era Mithra(s) and the Sun are more closely linked in both sphere of influence and in physical nature.

This limited account is perhaps the most extensive we can give tracing the transformation of Iranian Mithra from a god of contract into a solar deity; the fact that both the Sun and Mithra were traditionally enforcers of truth and observers of human action led to the conflation of the two deities. We have not yet, however, brought cattle into the discussion of the Iranian evidence; the association of Mithra with cattle should clarify our explanations.

A clear connection between Mithra and cattle is found in three verses of the Mithra Yašt. In these verses, Mithra is called upon to be the protector of the Cow who has been seized by the followers of the Lie.

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<sup>65</sup> Edwards 1990 ingeniously explains the mistaken gender by alleging a second more comprehensible mistake on the part of the historian: Herodotus mistook Mithras as the morning star, a female deity in the Greek pantheon. His hypothesis requires Mithra to be distinct from the sun at the time of Herodotus' inquiries.

<sup>66</sup> 30.4: εἶπε μοι σεβόμενος Μίθρου τε φῶς μέγα καὶ δεξιὰν βασιλῆιον.

<sup>67</sup> 4.13.12: *Ipse cum ducibus propinquisque agmina in armis stantium circumibat, Solem Mithram sacrumque et aeternum invocans ignem, ut illis dignam vetere gloria maiorumque monumentis fortitudinem inspirarent.* Actually, the Latin is somewhat ambiguous as to whether the Sun and Mithras are separate entities, depending on what exactly *-que* connects.

The Cow, accustomed to pastures, [who is in the clutches of men false to the covenant], pulls (their wagon) along the dusty road of captivity, dragged forward as their draft animal. Tears are flowing in a stream along her face. (38)

... also when the Cow, (she) (85) who being led away captive, with outstretched hands, yearning for the herd, regularly invokes (Mithra) for help, (thus), "When will Mithra of the wide pastures, the hero, driving from behind, make us reach the herd, when will he turn us who are being driven to the abode of the Lie, to the path of Truth?" (86)<sup>68</sup>

As argued by Duchesne-Guillemin and later by Lincoln, these verses seem to answer the important question of Yasna 29, "The Bovine's Lament," as to who will defend and protect the Cow.<sup>69</sup> Here in the Yašt, Mithra the god is called upon as a defender, whereas, in Yasna 29, Ahura Mazdā and his angelic manifestations are invoked, and Zarathustra is provided as a defender, albeit a weak one in the view of the Cow. For the followers of Dumézil, these verses from the Mithra Yašt are evidence that Wohu Manah, "Good Mind," in Yasna 29 has taken the place traditionally reserved for Mithra in the myth. See, for example, 29.7 where the Cow pleads "through Good Mind for a protector."<sup>70</sup>

One does not have to accept Dumézil's reconstruction of the old Iranian religion in order to identify Mithra as the original defender of the Cow in Yasna 29. Ilya Gershevitch has designated Mithra as the

<sup>68</sup> The translation is taken from Malandra 1983:63, 69.

<sup>69</sup> For Yasna 29, see Lommel 1971; Tavadia 1950–52; Humbach 1959; Cameron 1968:278–79; Insler 1975; Lincoln 1975:337–62; Malandra 1983:35–39; and Kellens and Pirart 1988.

<sup>70</sup> According to Dumézil's reconstruction of Iranian religion before Zarathustra, Wohu Manah is the replacement of the older Mithra among the Aməša Spəntas. This reconstruction is given in detail in *Naissance d'Archanges* (1945), but is summarized in *Les Dieux des Indo-Européens* (1952), 18–22. The fact that Mithra is the savior of the Cow in Yašt 10 and Wohu Manah has a prominent role in Yasna 29 is seen as an independent confirmation of Dumézil's reconstruction of the forerunners of the Aməša Spəntas. See Duchesne-Guillemin 1973:104. See also Lincoln 1975:355 and 1981:131; he does not believe that Mithra must have been the original protector of the Cow in the Indo-Iranian version of the myth.

protector of the Cow through a careful analysis of the dvandva compound *pāyū-θwōrāstār*, “protector-creator,” in comparison with the older dvandva *miθra-ahura*. By identifying a correspondence between the creative aspect of Ahura Mazdā, Spənta Mainyu, and the *θwōrāstār* element of the former compound, Gershevitch noted that the *pāyu* element of this compound is in correspondence with the *miθra* element of the latter compound. In other words, *θwōrāstār* is to Ahura Mazdā as *pāyu* is to Mithra. It is in this aspect of *pāyu*, “protector,” that Mithra becomes the defender of cattle, according to Gershevitch. Furthermore, Mithra as the protector element of this compound seems to confirm the earlier suggestion about a rivalry between Zarathustra and Mithra for the role of defender of the Cow, since the prophet is cited as the protector element in the *pāyū-θwōrāstār* compound when it appears again at Yasna 42.2.<sup>71</sup> The relationship between protector and creator demonstrated in the compound also fits rather neatly with the dialogue of Yasna 29, for there it is the creator of the Cow who searches for a protector for the Cow, although the terms used are not *pāyu* and *θwōrāstār*.<sup>72</sup> In Yasna 29, it is Zarathustra who is designated as protector of the Cow, but elsewhere it is Mithra who lays claim to the title, and although the god may have been supplanted in the former hymn, his role as cattle-protector is still evident in the Mithra Yašt and through the old dvandva epithet.

Mithra’s role as tutelary deity is further corroborated by his standing epithet *wouru-gaoyaoiti*, a bahuvrīhi compound literally meaning “possessing wide pastures,” and usually rendered as “of wide pastures.” (Note its occurrence in verse 86 of the Mithra Yašt above.) The epithet has been explained by Emile Benveniste, who has shown that it is much more than an allusion to the god’s ability to provide sustenance for herding animals. The epithet refers to the god’s ability to keep a large region safe for his followers; the wide pastures are the lands which Mithra protects and preserves. Like many of the religious

<sup>71</sup> See Gershevitch 1959:54–58.

<sup>72</sup> The creator of the Cow is the *tašā gāuš* (29.2), and the protector/pastor is the *vāstrā* (29.2).

images in the Avesta, the god's preserving aspect is presented in pastoral terms.<sup>73</sup> Benveniste uses Yašt 10.112 in forming his interpretation of the compound, of which he provides the following translation:

Brillantes sont les voies de Mithra,  
quand il parcourt ce pays  
où il reçoit bon traitement;  
larges profondes pour la *gaoyaoiti*;  
alors leur bétail et leurs hommes  
se meuvent en toute liberté.

The key to understanding the verse and thus the term *gaoyaoiti*, “pasture,” is the last line. Mithra through his *gaoyaoiti* provides a place where humans and animals can live in complete freedom, a place which Benveniste terms “lieu d’asile.” Yet, even in this verse, which Benveniste uses to argue against a naturalistic interpretation of Mithra, the characteristics of the god which he shares with the sun confront the listeners: “brilliant are the paths of Mithra when he traverses the country where he is well-treated.” Even when Mithra assumes the role of tutor of cattle, he does so in a manner similar to a solar deity.

It is worth noting at this point that we have already seen a conjunction of pasture and sanctuary on the island of the Sun in Homer. Keep in mind that there is not only ample pasturage for the herds on that island, but the cattle there have also been endowed with an odd sort of immortality. Although Homer does not explicitly state that the Sun actually provides the cattle with these gifts, we can suppose he does so since the gifts are explicitly provided by the Sun elsewhere in Greek mythology, namely in the story of King Augeas of Elis, as told in the Theocritean corpus. As we have seen, King Augeas, the son of Helios, truly maintains the widest pastures of any figure in Greek history, and the poet of Theocritus 25 goes out of his way to create a picture of Augeas’ vast holdings: there were herds north at Buprasium and the mountains of Acroria, south on the river Alpheus, and in central Elis on the streams of the Helisus and the Menius. In these pastures a multi-

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<sup>73</sup> Benveniste 1960.

tude of grasses and grains are available for the herds.<sup>74</sup> Yet these large holdings are not the only asset ascribed to Augeas. Helios provides his son with more cattle than any other human being, and what is more, he also protects the cattle from all diseases and misfortunes.

Helios gave his son a most excellent gift, that he be rich in flocks beyond all other men, and moreover Helios himself increased the herds continuously without end, for never did any disease befall them of the kind which destroy the works of the herdsmen.<sup>75</sup>

So in Greek myth we find at least two instances where ample pasturage is characterized as a *lieu d'asile*, free from sickness, death, and other cares, comparable to that which Mithra of the wide pastures secures. The pertinent question is to our study is whether this function of Mithra is native to the god of contract or subsumed from the sun god. The cattle-protecting aspects of Mithra are found as far back as the Mithra Yašt and beyond into the hoary past of Indo-Iranian culture, if Gershevitch, Duchesne-Guillemin, and Dumézil are correct. However, the Sun too can lay claim to the title of protector. When Mithra of the Mithra Yašt moves across the Aryan lands, he not only mimics the movements of the sun across the sky but also marks out a wide area for the Aryan peoples. If the movements of the sun are viewed as designating the boundaries of the land of the Aryans, the sun god too could lay claim to the title “possessing wide pastures,” especially since the Sun in Greek culture provides a similar protective aspect, particularly where cattle are concerned. In short, we cannot assume that the qualities of Mithra are all native to Mithra; as he was not always a sun god, he may not have always been a protector of cattle or a guardian of the wide-pastures. These elements too could have just as easily been aspects of the character of the solar deity which Mithra

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<sup>74</sup> The description of Augeas' plantation starts at line 7 and concludes with the words of summation at 29–31.

<sup>75</sup> 25.118–22: Ἥλιος δ' ὃ παιδὶ τόγ' ἔξοχον ὤπασε δῶρον, / ἀφνειὸν μῆλ' οἰς  
περὶ πάντων ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν, / καὶ ῥά οἱ αὐτὸς ὄφελλε διαμπερέως βοτὰ πάντα  
/ ἐς τέλος· οὐ μὲν γάρ τις ἐπήλυθε νοῦσος ἐκείνου / βουκολίῳ, αἶτ' ἔργα  
καταφθειροῦσι νομήων.

assumed along with his natural solar qualities. Bruno Jacobs in fact gathered the classical sources on the Achaemenid sun god; he names the Sun as one of the three central deities in an Achaemenid pantheon predating the transformation of Mithra from contract to sun.<sup>76</sup>

There is at least one locus in the major Iranian religious texts where cattle and the sun are joined together directly. In Yasna 32, in listing the qualities of those who do not follow the teachings of his new religion, the prophet rails against men who are too awestruck by the sun and cattle:

That man does indeed destroy the doctrine who says the worst thing for the purpose of seeing the cow and the sun with his eyes. (32.10)<sup>77</sup>

The language here is straightforward; the question is what does the passage mean, and to what is the prophet referring when he speaks of the cow and the sun. A number of ideas have been put forward. Humbach, whose translation we follow, thought that the phrase “to see the cow and the sun” referred to an Iranian ritual similar to the Vedic ceremony of the rising sun.<sup>78</sup> George Cameron believes the passage to be a pronouncement against the sacrifice of cattle.<sup>79</sup> Hermann Lommel thought it to be a sophistic attempt to convert the followers of the traditional religion, with Mithra as the sun, and the cow being a reference to the tauroctony.<sup>80</sup> Gershevitch also worked on this particular verse, but his translation was marred by a syntactical error.<sup>81</sup>

Gershevitch’s interpretation is not dependent upon his translation however. Using a parallel expression from Yasna 9.29, Gershevitch argues that the expression “to see the cow and the sun” means to go

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<sup>76</sup> Jacobs 1991.

<sup>77</sup> *hvō mā nā sravā mōrandaṭ yā acištām vaēnaṭhē aogadā gqm ašibyā hvarēcā.*

<sup>78</sup> See the translation for 32.10 in Humbach 1959.

<sup>79</sup> Cameron 1968:279–80.

<sup>80</sup> See Lommel 1962.

<sup>81</sup> Gershevitch construed *acištām vaēnaṭhē* as an accusative and infinitive construction similar to Latin indirect discourse. See 1975:68–89. As Kellens 1988 pointed out in his commentary to this verse, the infinitive cannot be used this way in Avestan.

to paradise. At Yasna 9.29 curses are called down upon the follower of the Lie, among which is found, “May he not see the earth with his evil eyes; may he not see the cow with his evil eyes.”<sup>82</sup> Gershevitch goes on to claim that “seeing the cow and the sun” is one step beyond “seeing the cow and the earth,” and with the recognition that paradise according to the Avesta is a sunny place, conjectures that “to see the cow and the sun” at 32.10 refers to going to heaven. As we said, this line of reasoning is not dependent on his translation, although the argument itself could use further support.

Gershevitch posited that Zoroaster had coined the expression “to see the cow and the sun” for this particular hymn.<sup>83</sup> The comparative evidence would, however, argue to the contrary. We have already noted the realm of immortality which the Sun surveys on Homeric Thrinakia. There are, furthermore, a few Vedic references to paradise as a realm of cattle and the sun, a fact more significant to the Iranian situation, because of the early association of the two peoples. In the R̥g Veda and Atharva Veda, we find that the souls of the beneficent travel to a paradise of bright light, a light which is often connected to the sun. For example, at RV 9.113.7 and 9, the hymnist prays for immortality:

7. Where the light does not weaken, in that world where the sunlight has been placed, in that deathless, undecaying world, O Pavamāna (Soma), set me. . . .<sup>84</sup>

9. Where the way is pleasing, on the third vault (*trināké*) of heaven, possessed

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<sup>82</sup> *mā zqm vaēnōiṭ ašibya, mā gqm vaēnōiṭ ašibya*. Like many passages of the Avesta, Yasna 9.29 has been interpreted differently by different scholars. Stanley Insler used 9.29 as evidence for his claim that “to see the cow and the sun” meant “to remain alive” along with the expression *gqm hvarəcā vaən* “to see the earth and the sun.” See Insler’s commentary to Yasna 32.10. I argue that Gershevitch’s explanation is more in keeping with the comparative evidence.

<sup>83</sup> Gershevitch 1975:79: “And now you do not have to know another word of Avestan. By relying on no more than common sense, one may confidently say that ‘seeing the cow and the sun’ was an idiom, perhaps even an idiom invented *ad hoc* by Zoroaster, for ‘going to Paradise.’”

<sup>84</sup> *yātra jyótir djasraṃ yásmiṃl loké svār hitām / tásmin mām dhehi pavamānāmṛte loké ákṣite . . .*



of three heavens (*tridivé*), where the worlds are full of light, there make me immortal. . . .<sup>85</sup>

These verses give us the connection to light, but note also the locative forms *trināké*, “third vault,” and *tridivé*, “third heaven,” for these words will provide the link to cows and the key to understanding the Gāthic usage.

AV 9.5 also deals with the question of immortality, directly relating the offering of sacrificial goat to the winning of immortality. Furthermore, in this hymn the place where immortality is bestowed is again described as bright, and here the sun is mentioned explicitly:

18. The goat Pañcaudana, when cooked, dispelling the darkness of destruction, sets (one) in the world where the sun travels; by him, may we win the worlds full of the sun.<sup>86</sup>

The allusion to sacrifice in this verse is worth consideration, for it is through sacrifice that one attains the world of immortal light, and sacrifice is a important matter in the solar mythology we have reviewed previously. But what of cattle? The terms *trināká-* and *tridivá-* recur in the same hymn with the term *tripṛṣṭhá-* added. These terms of cosmography can be used to introduce a bovine character and tie together the themes of sacrifice, sun, and cattle in the Vedic paradise:

10. The goat sets the one having given on the back of the vault, the back possessed of three heavens, of three vaults (*trināké*), of three backs; you, o goat (Pañcaudana), bestowed upon a brahman, are the one wish-milking cow of all forms.<sup>87</sup>

It is the odd reference to the *kāmadúghā dhenú-*, “wish-milking cow,” which is most intriguing. How does a goat become a cow? When a cow it is not a physical entity but a metaphor for paradise — a wish-milking

<sup>85</sup> *yátrānukāmāṃ cāraṇaṃ trināké tridivé divāḥ / lokā yātra jyótiṣmantas tatra mām amṛtaṃ kṛdhi . . .*

<sup>86</sup> *ajāḥ pakvāḥ svargé loké dadhāti pañcaudano nírṛtiṃ bádhamānaḥ / téna lokánt sūryavato jayema //*

<sup>87</sup> *ajás trināké tridivé tripṛṣṭhé nākasya pṛṣṭhé dadivāṃsaṃ dadhāti / páñcaudano brahmāne dīyāmāno viśvárūpā dhenúḥ kāmadúghāsi ékā //*

cow, a cow of paradise. It is not exceptional in Indo-Iranian thought for a cow to represent a religious concept, such as immortality. In the R̥g Veda, “cow,” *dhenu-* can stand for *dhī-*, “poetic vision,” and in Avestan, in a parallel manner, it seems that the cow represents *daēnā*, or “religious vision.” It has recently been argued, in fact, that Mithra himself, in duties assumed from the dawn, may serve as the tutor of the psychic aspect of the *daēnā*.<sup>88</sup>

By combining the information of RV 9.113 with that of AV 9.5 we can now reveal a place on the back of the third vault of heaven which shines with light of the sun, where one may attain immortality; moreover, an omnipotent cow is used to describe that same region.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the cow and the sun, which Gershevitch hypothesized to be an idiom for heaven in Yasna 32, can be related to a region of immortality in Vedic thought in addition to the immortality offered on Homeric Thrinakia.

The key to understanding this complex of solar mythology would seem to be sacrifice: the Sun is a keeper of contracts, and one of the most important forms of contract between immortals and gods is the ritual of sacrifice. The ritual of sacrifice necessarily involves victims, and cattle are often the victim. Finally, one end of the ritual is often the provision of immortality for both the victim and the sacrificer. Thus sacrifice is the link between the sun and cattle and immortality.

In confirmation of this interrelation, let us turn again to the Bovine’s Lament (Yasna 29), in order to note the role of sacrifice in that text. Even if sacrifice was de-emphasized in the Zoroastrian reform, the question of proper ritual remains an important issue in the hymn. Verse

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<sup>88</sup> For the cow as a metaphor for religious or poetic vision, see Malandra 1983:37–38; Insler 1975:141–47; and Schmidt 1979:104–13. For Mithra’s association with the *daēnā* as soul in the afterlife, see Kellens 1994:165–71. The role of psychopomp may be another function which Mithra assumes from the Sun. See Lincoln 1991:82–83, and Frame 1978:21–24, 34–80.

<sup>89</sup> There are other Vedic verses which link cows and immortality, the most conspicuous of which is AV 10.10.26: *vaśānevāmṛtamāhuḥ*, “they call the cow immortal life. . .,” but see also AV 4.35.8; 11.1.28; 18.4.30–34. For a fuller discussion of these structures in the Vedic cosmos, see Sick 1996b:121–69. and 1998:189–94.

seven refers to the *mąθra* which Ahura Mazdā made for the libation of fat or butter and milk (*āzūtoiš*); as in the Vedic example of the myth of the Panis, the sacrificial elements must come from the Cow, and the gods' involvement in the sacrificial ritual is definite, since Ahura Mazdā himself has provided the *mąθra* or religious formula to be used in the ritual.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the hymn itself shows a struggle between those who worship properly and those who do not. First, the Cow is to be given to a person who is careful follower of the religious doctrines and who is well-acquainted with the sacred forms of speech: "this one who obeys our teachings . . . he wishes to chant hymns for us and for Aša, O Lord. . ." (29.8).<sup>91</sup> In the context of Yasna 29 this person is Zarathustra. It is furthermore clear from the first verse that the Cow is suffering great hardship, held against her will by a group of non-believers. Verse two and the passages from the Mithra Yašt (10.86) state explicitly that the captors of the Cow are indeed the followers of the Lie. Since the Cow will provide the *āzūtoiš* for sacrifice, one definite consequence of the illegal possession of the Cow by non-believers is the prevention of the ritual of sacrifice.<sup>92</sup> If the hymn is then attempting to indicate the proper owner of the Cow in order that she may be used in her proper ritual function, the last verse of the hymn

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<sup>90</sup> For *mąθra*, see Bartholomae's dictionary, where he explains that the word is used mainly for religious expressions and spells. The *mąθra* is thus the holy formula which needs to be uttered for the ritual to be effective.

<sup>91</sup> *aēm . . . yā nā aēvō sāsna gūšatā . . . hvō nā mazdā vaštī ašāicā carakərəθrā srāvayeghē. . .*

<sup>92</sup> Lincoln 1981:153, agrees that "the purpose of the cattle is to provide the materials for libation sacrifice." The proper form of sacrifice would be the use of the milk and butter from a cow along with the correct *mąθra*. In his view the hymn reflects a struggle between priests and warriors within Iranian society. Priests might use the cows for their proper ritual function; warriors would steal and slaughter the cattle improperly. Another frequently offered explanation is that Zarathustra disallowed animal sacrifice, and hence the Cow is distraught because it is being led off to be sacrificed by non-Zoroastrians. Lincoln 1981:149 n.42 lists those scholars who argue that the Cow is to be sacrificed; Kellens 2000 provides a strong argument against the claim that the Gathic community was anti-ritual.

takes on new significance. The speakers refer to their own liberality toward the gods; this liberality may refer to the worshippers' donations to the god through sacrifice. The last verse then distinguishes those who properly make offerings to the gods in the correct manner from those who do not.

#### *V. Conclusions and a Prospectus for Roman Mithraism*

We have described in some detail a system of myths centered on the sun in Greece and India. In Iran, the land that bridges the space between India and Greece culturally and geographically, the situation is more complex, both because of the transformation of the god Mithra and Zoroastrian reforms. Mithra assumes the physical nature of the sun, because of his function as a god of contract. He is also the defender of the Cow and a guardian of safe havens, termed pastures, a duty attributed to the Sun in Greece and India. Mithra's connection to sacrifice and its resulting immortal gifts are more tenuous and subsidiary at best. If one posits that he was the original defender of the Cow in Yasna 29, he also would have been the tutor of the ritual by-products of that animal. As a deity who maintains a *lieu d'asile* for animals and humans, he might have been the defender of the immortality awarded to sacrificer and sacrificial victim.

We have come quite far in the original goal of this study; we have shown that Iranian Mithra, although not a solar deity in form until after the Avestan period, assumed roles attributed to the solar deity in Greece and India, even within the Avestan period. Thus, in some sense, his transformation had already begun, or he was predisposed to such a metamorphosis because of the spheres of influence he assumed. As Gershevitch noted in "Die Sonne das Beste," "It is one thing to be a sun god. It is quite another to be a god whose attributes include one that is capable of serving as a pretext for people to turn him into a sun god."<sup>93</sup> We have discovered more than one such attribute.

The next step in our delineation of the history of Mit(h)ra(s) should be to search for a similar set of myths in the texts and monuments

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<sup>93</sup> Gershevitch 1975:75.

of Roman Mithraism. The comparison which would result from such a search, because of the complexities and the long controversies in Mithraic studies, deserves its own treatment. For now, we can only offer a few suggestions. The elements of the myths we have outlined are surely present in Roman Mithraism: cattle, sacrifice, and immortality. Associations with cattle are found in Mithras' epithet βουκλόπος;<sup>94</sup> associations with solemn agreements are found in Mithraic terms such as *dextrarum iunctio* and συνδέξιος used in initiation;<sup>95</sup> associations with sacrifice in the famous tauroctony of myth and the communal feasts of the cult; associations with immortality in the very nature of a mystery cult. But what of the Sun? In the Roman cult, the solar deity and Mithras are nearly indistinguishable. At times, the two are viewed as partners, and, at other times, they are the same deity.<sup>96</sup> We would expect as much, for, if the Roman Mithras is a descendant of the Iranian god, he descends from a god in the process of transformation, who, although strictly not a solar deity, vaunts a resume listing various narratives from a widespread solar mythology.

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<sup>94</sup> Porph. *Antr.* 18.14–16

<sup>95</sup> Le Glay 1978. Clauss 2001:151–52 describes the Sun's role in these agreements.

<sup>96</sup> Clauss 2001:146–55.

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## FORGING MAṆḌALIC SPACE: BHAKTAPUR, NEPAL'S COW PROCESSION AND THE IMPROVISATION OF TRADITION

GREGORY PRICE GRIEVE

### *Summary*

In 1995, as part of Bhaktapur, Nepal's Cow Procession, the new suburban neighborhood of Suryavinayak celebrated a "forged" goat sacrifice. Forged religious practices seem enigmatic if one assumes that traditional practice consists only of the blind imitation of timeless structure. Yet, the sacrifice was not mechanical repetition; it could not be, because it was the first and only time it was celebrated. Rather, the religious performance was a conscious manipulation of available "traditional" cultural logics that were strategically utilized during the Cow Procession's loose carnivalesque atmosphere to solve a contemporary problem — what can one do when one lives beyond the borders of religiously organized cities such as Bhaktapur? This paper argues that the "forged" sacrifice was a means for this new neighborhood to operate together and improvise new maṇḍalic space beyond the city's traditional cultic territory.

[E]very field anthropologist knows that no performance of a rite, however rigidly prescribed, is exactly the same as another performance. . . . Variable components make flexible the basic core of most rituals.

Tambiah 1979:115

In Bhaktapur, Nepal around 5.30 P.M. on August 19, 1995, a castrated male goat was sacrificed to Suryavinayak, the local form of the god Ganesha.<sup>1</sup> As part of the city's Cow Procession (nb. *Sāyā*,

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<sup>1</sup> The Kathmandu Valley is a multilingual landscape, with the Newar language (Nepal Bhasa), Nepali, English and a multitude of other tongues intermingling. For instance, the city itself is referred to under three main names: in Sanskrit (hereafter np.) "Bhaktapur," in Newar (Nepal Bhasa [hereafter nb.]) "Khwopa," and in Nepali "Bhadgāo(n)." For a balance between ease of utilization and accuracy to the material depicted, at first usage I will print the word in its np. form, followed by the nb. word in parentheses. Words in general circulation, and some proper nouns, are written in their anglicized form without diacritics. For instance, for *nepāl* I write Nepal.



Figure 1. Forged goat sacrifice in front of the god-image of Suryavinayak. (Photograph by Sanjeev Gongah, 1995)

np. Gāi Jātra), this “cutting of the animal” was performed by the Suryavinayak neighborhood and was sponsored by Tejeswar Babu Gongah (Figure 1). Goat sacrifices are not unique in the Kathmandu Valley. In fact, they are an everyday occurrence, especially during the festival season with many thousands being sacrificed during the holiday of Dasai(n) (nb. Mohanī) alone. What made this particular event stand out, however, was that it was *nakali*. *Nakali* is a Nepali word, often borrowed by Newars (the largest ethnic group in Bhaktapur), that is usually translated as “imitated” or “fake.” However, when asked for a definition of “*nakali*,” people in Bhaktapur tend to give the example of a forged banknote. With this in mind, I use the English word “forgery” to translate *nakali* in order to theorize the act of creating an imitation, or of modifying an authentic object, so that it can be used as if it were the original. In short, I use “forgery,” not to deny the authenticity<sup>2</sup> of the sacrifice, but to articulate the

<sup>2</sup> On notions of authenticity and cultural change, see Underwood 2000.

performers' creative<sup>3</sup> and improvisational<sup>4</sup> use of "religious<sup>5</sup> performance."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Such social creativity should not be theorized in the Romantic sense, as genius that imagines novelty out of thin air (cf. Murray 1989). Instead, "creativity" is collective contextualized and mediated action performed in relation to specific problem solving (Bauman 1977, 1992; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Briggs 1988; Goodwin and Duranti 1992).

<sup>4</sup> In the performing arts, improvisation is typically viewed as the "skill of using bodies, space, all human resources, to generate a coherent physical expression of an idea, a situation, a character, to do this spontaneously, and to do it *à l'improviste*: as through taken by surprise, without preconceptions" (Frost and Yarrow 1990:1). I use the model of musical and theater improvisation (cf. Berliner 1994; Sawyer 1996). Yet, what I am chiefly interested in is improvisational theater (Coleman 1990; Johnstone 1981; Spolin 1963). I build upon the written work of a number of three major sources — Keith Johnstone, Del Close, and Viola Spolin (cf. Johnstone 1981; Halpern, Close and Johnson 1991; Spolin 1963; Sweet 1978).

<sup>5</sup> My use of the category of *religious* does a double labor. First, following Dipesh Chakrabarty's handling of the word "peasant," I employ the term as a cipher for those life practices that, from within *Enlightenment discourse*, are posited as other than *Enlightenment discourse* (2000:11). Second, while social scientists, and especially historians of religion, seem tongue-tied in defining religion, people in Bhaktapur tend to have no problem whatsoever. Religion deals with the gods (np. *deva*, nb. *dya*). The difficulty arises, however, over the contextualized translation of "god." Gods in Bhaktapur tend not to be the abstract beliefs that most elite scholarship implies. For most people in Bhaktapur, there is no question of believing in gods. They are concrete presences that can be seen, heard, touched, and even tasted. However, one should be aware that in all actuality "religion" is an abstraction that is logically untranslatable, and I employ it here to gloss a constellation of locally used terms. First among these is *dharma*, and for the most part that I spoke with people, this is the term that I used. But as is well known, *dharma* can also mean "one's duty," etc. Other words that fit closely with *dharma*, and were used often in its stead, were *paramparā*, tradition or lineage. People also spoke of *sanskriti* (culture), *chalan* and *riti-tithi* (custom), as well as the English loan *kalchar* (I would like to thank Brent Bianchi for helping me think through these terms).

<sup>6</sup> Following Goffman, I define "performance" broadly as "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some effect on the observers" (1959:22). Milton Singer argues that the phrase "cultural performance" accurately maps a category recognized by and salient to people in South Asia (1955).

Yet, what made this sacrifice forged? Although the sacrifice was *nakali*, the goat was still killed. Its throat was cut, and its blood was splattered on the image of Ganesh. In fact, once under way, there was little apparent difference between this “forged” celebration and an “authentic” festival: it had a procession, a sacrifice, and even a ritual feast—all key elements of “authentic” worship. Therefore, in what is key for the entire argument, I describe the sacrifice as forged not because *I* thought it was forged, but because the Nepalis participating in the sacrifice described it as such. Still, why celebrate a forged sacrifice? The time and expense of the forged sacrifice indicates that such religious performances are, as John MacAloon writes, “more than entertainment, more than didactic or persuasive formulations, and more than cathartic indulgences” (1984:1). Instead, as recent social scientific scholarship on performance theory, festivals and ritual have demonstrated, such religious practices can be theorized as a technique for constructing and structuring “lived worlds.”<sup>7</sup>

Often, however (and especially in religious studies), such world generating cultural logics are misunderstood because they are posed simultaneously as both a timeless static structure, and as a slowly decaying ancient order.<sup>8</sup> For example, as Robert Levy writes in *Mesocosm: Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar City in Nepal*, Bhaktapur is a “mesocosm out of time,” which in the face of modernity has run “on in very much the old way, like a clockwork mechanism

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<sup>7</sup> For example see: MacAloon 1984; Bell 1992; Kapferer 1986; Sullivan 1986; Schechner 1985, 1988, 1993; Tambiah 1979. By using the notion of a lived world, I mean to model the processes by which countless and many-faceted but coherent and dependent variables contribute to a particular shared world. Accordingly, a lived world is not a permanent fixed structure, but a constantly changing social reality, which emerges from a particular socio-historical and geographic situation. Following the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), by “world” I am concerned not with a “reality’s” ultimate ontological status but rather with socially constructed existence.

<sup>8</sup> On how “tradition” as a discourse and practice operates in Bhaktapur, see Grieve 2003b. On the relation between social constructivist and perennial theories of religion, see J.Z. Smith’s classic article, “The Wobbling Pivot” (1978:88–103).

assembled long ago that no one had bothered to disassemble” (1990:28, 15). There is no doubt a difference between cities such as New York and Tokyo (as well as Kathmandu for that matter) and Bhaktapur. Yet, because Levy poses an unrecognizable gap between “modernity” and “tradition,” he essentializes Bhaktapur as “ancient,” “archaic,” “axial,” “conservative,” “premodern,” and “traditional” (1990).<sup>9</sup>

For Levy, instead of people, Bhaktapur is inhabited by a “dance of symbols” (1990:16–18, 401–616). This would be academic, except that by essentializing Bhaktapur as a “traditional city,” and having the nature of tradition be determined by a timeless symbol system, Levy robs the city’s citizens of agency and the possibility of creatively using traditional cultural logics.<sup>10</sup> The reification of an abstract symbol system creates two pitfalls. First, because Levy’s theory cannot incorporate the creative, generative and improvisational aspects of tradition, there is an epistemological reduction of the material. For instance, Levy is forced to dismiss the Cow Festival, the city’s third most important festival and the one that is most recognizably Bhaktapurian, as little more than “anti-structure” (1990:451; cf. Anderson 1971). In short, because of his theoretical assumptions, Levy must turn a blind-eye to rituals such as the fake goat sacrifice.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For Levy, *modernity* is “education; agriculture; health programs; increasing travel in and out of the country; burgeoning communications of all kinds, books, movies, radio and internal transportations,” while *tradition* is the “static social order of Hinduism” which is characterized by caste (1990:15, 23). Levy’s adherence to the “Great divide” (1990:23–27) comes about because he attempts to force Bhaktapur into a “traditional” interpretation of the city as seen as in Fustel de Coulanges 1956 and Wheatley 1971.

<sup>10</sup> I am using “robs” in a technical Barthian sense (1984).

<sup>11</sup> For instance in *Mesocosm*’s 823 pages, Levy lingers for 119 pages on Mohanī (the Devī Cycle), while only 10 pages on Sāyā (1990). He ignores the carnival processions except for one sentence (1990:451). One could argue that the Cow Procession was not the subject matter for *Mesocosm*. However, Levy claims to be representing the entire “symbolic ordering of Bhaktapur” (1990:8).

Second, by esseentializing an abstracted symbol system Levy inscribes a pair of intertwined asymmetrical power relations.<sup>12</sup> On one hand, he makes normative the “ideal view” of the Rājopādhyāyā Brahmins.<sup>13</sup> As he writes: “Whatever the untouchable, for example, thinks about it all, it is these [brahminic] conceptions that form the matrix of his life. Against the ordering interpretation of the elite, popular interpretations where they differ are . . . simply ‘wrong’” (1990:9).<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, while the Rājopādhyāyā Brahmins may be penultimate, he inscribes his own “modern” voice as the ultimate authority. This occurs because, while Levy understands the city’s inhabitants as “sophisticated” and relies on them for collaboration, they cannot be “critical intellectuals” because they are essentially “traditional” (1990:31–32).<sup>15</sup>

What is provocative about the fake sacrifice, especially in light of interpretation such as Levy’s, is that the creative and improvisational nature of the performance shows that traditional practices cannot be reduced to blind imitation of timeless rules.<sup>16</sup> The ceremony was not an eternal repetition of the same. It was not a “dance of symbols” performed out of the unconscious replication of an existing cultural structure. Instead, it was a conscious manipulation of available “traditional” cultural logics that were strategically utilized to solve

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<sup>12</sup> One senses that Levy at least has an inkling of this problem. As he qualifies his argument, “Our emphasis on the order of Bhaktapur is very liable to appear regressive, ideological, Orientalist, and various other unpleasant things in the contemporary climate of criticism of essays presenting ‘other’ times and ‘other’ peoples” (1990:9).

<sup>13</sup> For alternative views of Bhaktapur’s “order,” see Parish 1994 & 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Compare to Parish (1994). As Parish writes: “Thus, Bhaktapur is many cities — a plurality of imagined cities within a single space. . . . It would be wrong to privilege one vision, one version of Newar culture, making it canonical, thereby denying reality to others” (1994:69–70).

<sup>15</sup> Compare for instance to Liechty 2003:232–46.

<sup>16</sup> I would like to thank Rick Wiess (Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand) and his theories on tradition for this insight.



a contemporary problem. As we will see in greater detail below, the problem that faced the people of Suryavinayak was how to forge a new lived reality beyond the traditional cultic borders of Bhaktapur. The cultural logic manipulated for this task was “maṇḍalization,” one of the most important forms of world building cultural logics in Nepal’s Kathmandu Valley. To articulate how people use religious agency to forge new traditional lived worlds, I coin the term “generative cultural matrixes.”<sup>17</sup> All people make the worlds they live in. A generative cultural matrix theorizes how lived worlds are improvised from the “tug-of-war” between peoples’ desires and restraints of a particular social field.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The word “matrix” has two meanings: (1) a hollow device for shaping a fluid or plastic substance; (2) a rectangular array of elements (e.g., numbers) considered as a single entity. Both of these understandings define a matrix as a device for shaping a chaotic flow into structure. It is this generative quality that I am attempting to capture by using the term. In a sense, my goal in using the notion of a generative cultural matrix is to tease out the agential, improvisational and world construction nature of Erving Goffman’s concepts frame, and Bourdieu’s theory of the social field. Goffman coined the term “frame” to describe the way experiences are organized by the contextual boundaries of a social encounter. People use frames to identify what is taking place. For example, a speech act may be a joke, a warning, a lesson, an invitation and so on. My understanding of “frame” is influenced by Alfred Gell’s notion of “Index”; these are material entities that motivate inferences, responses and interpretations (1998). In a moment of ironic precision, Bourdieu defines field as “[*(habitus)* (*{symbolic}capital*)] + field = practice” (Bourdieu 1984:101 “{ }” brackets added by author). For Bourdieu, “habitus” is an agent’s residue or sediment of their past that functions within their present, shaping their perception, thought and action and thereby molding social practice in a regular way. It consists in dispositions, schemas, forms of know-how and competence. As he writes: “the schemes of the habitus, the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will (Bourdieu 1984:466).

<sup>18</sup> Also, following Peter Berger (1966, 1967) I use the term generative cultural matrix to describe the generative affect between society and people (cf. 1967:3).

*The Cow Procession*

Celebrated in the waning fortnight of Gu(n)lāgā (August), Bhaktapur's Cow Procession (np. Gāi Jātrā, nb. Sāyā) is an intimate mix of death and carnival that commemorates those who have died in Bhaktapur during the previous year with a procession of "cow floats" and a series of satirical performances (nb. *khyāla*:).<sup>19</sup> There is no official report on the Cow Procession's meaning. No published account or completely codified oral account exists.<sup>20</sup> Yet, the various versions all point to the procession of real and symbolic cows that give the festival its name, and to the "cow goddess" who leads the spirits of those who died in Bhaktapur during the preceding year across the Vaitaraṇi river to the realm of the dead.<sup>21</sup> For instance, the farmer and drumming instructor Hari Govinda Ranjitkar and his daughter reiterated the following story. Having heard that Cow Procession (nb. Sāyā) means (*sā*) cow and (*yā*) procession, I asked why we were celebrating the festival. Mr Ranjitkar said:

The Cow Procession makes the Cow Goddess happy, and if she is happy she will lead the dead person to heaven. The soul grasps onto the cow's tail. If a family does not do this, the dead person won't find his way and he will become a *bhūt* [a mischievous wandering spirit who will cause harm to both the family and the community]. (Personal communication, 20 August 1997)

Beyond helping the spirits find their way, the festival is also understood to suspend or at least suppress the karmic judgment that Yama,

<sup>19</sup> The Cow (np. Gāi, nb. Sā) Procession (np. Jatra, nb. Yā [derived from the Sanskrit *yātrā*]) has been recorded as being called Sāpāru. This may derive from *parewā* — the name given to the first day of the lunar fortnight. Levy (1990:442) suggests that it derives from *sāpā*, or cow mask.

<sup>20</sup> See Levy 1990:442–542. For non-Bhaktapurian versions, see Anderson 1971, and Nepali 1965.

<sup>21</sup> Vaitaraṇi is both the name of the river that separates the land of the living from the land of the dead, and also the term used for the cow presented to a priest during funeral rites (Stutley and Stutley 1977:318). Other ceremonies such as Mā(n)yā Khwa: Swāegu and Gokarna Au(n)si are performed for those who have been dead for longer than a year. The Cow Procession is only for those who have passed away in the preceding year.

the god of death, traditionally levies on those entering his realm (Levy 1990:442–44).

The procession's vanquishing of death, if only temporarily, is a common carnival theme (Bakhtin 1984; Metcalf 1979).<sup>22</sup> Uttam Jhā, a practicing Brahmin and head of the local chamber of commerce, narrated a myth that explained how the cow and the death motif intertwined with the carnivalesque aspects of the festival: the Cow Procession originated during the reign of King Jagat Prakash Malla (1644–1673).<sup>23</sup> The king started the festival when, after the death of his son, he was desperately searching for a means to comfort his grieving queen. To lift his wife's grief, Jagat Malla first sent out a procession of sacred cows to parade in the boy's memory. Yet the queen remained despondent. After the cow parade failed, Jagat had another idea. He ordered all his citizens who had lost a family member during the preceding year to parade below the queen's window so that she could see that she was not the only one who suffered the death of a family member. King Jagat Malla was about to order all of the costumed people punished when the queen began to laugh at all the carnival

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<sup>22</sup> The most obvious example for North American is Halloween and the Day of the Dead (Día de Los Muertos) (cf. Beezley 1994; Carmichael and Sayer 1992). The Dominican carnival in Santo Domingo has a figure who wears the classical skeleton and skull attire, always seeking to frighten others. Holding a scythe, this Death grabs children by their feet so that they can be hit by the Diablos with their air-filled bladders. This figure is popularly known as "La Muerte en Yipe" (Death Driving a Jeep) (cf. Aching 2002). In Russia funeral ceremonies like those of "Burying the Carnival" and "Carrying out Death" are celebrated under the names, not of Death or The Carnival, but of certain mythic figures, Kostrubonko, Kostroma, Kupalo, Lada, and Yarilo (Bueno-Román 1990). It can also be seen in the English "Dance of Death" (Boughton 1913). On the creation of a less carnivalesque "protestant" form of dying, see Koslofsky 2000.

<sup>23</sup> With the help of others sitting around the table, he supplied the following historical legend. In what I would call a classic example of collective agency, the story here was fleshed out not only by Mr Jhā, but by all those at the table. It would be hard to pin it down to a specific person, and it would be better in effect to cite it at the level of conversation.

activities.<sup>24</sup> In gratitude, King Jagat Malla proclaimed that every year on the day of the Cow Procession people would have complete freedom to do whatever they wanted.

Like the crowd proceeding below the queen's window, the festival takes the form of a procession that circumambulates the city along the city's procession route (sk. Pradaksinapatha).<sup>25</sup> Along this route (often simply called the "Cow Road" [np. Gāiko Bāto, nb. Sālā]), all families who have suffered the death of a member in the preceding year decorate either a cow float or a real cow and, together with a troupe of musicians and a convivial crowd of costumed revelers, dance and drink their way around the city (Figure 2). The procession route is filled with many hundreds of these troupes, each of which represents a particular deceased person.<sup>26</sup> Because each group enters the procession route at the point nearest their home and at convenient times for themselves, the social order of the procession is more or less random.<sup>27</sup> Each float is constructed by the individual's extended family and friends and is personalized with photographs and other household articles to

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<sup>24</sup> This tale is related to the Buddhist story of the mustard seed and Hindu folk tales of the laughing queen, except that the populace, outraged at this indignity, dressed up instead in garish costumes to taunt the king (personal communication, Wendy Doniger, June 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Bhaktapur's procession route moves within the city as a meandering oval. Dutt (1977:33) shows that in an ideal Hindu city, the Pradaksinapatha should circumambulate the outside wall. Slusser (1982, 1:93) argues that this was the case of Kathmandu. Barré *et al.* (1981:40–41) argues that for places such as the Newar village of Panauti, the processional route acts as a boundary of purity. It runs through all the city's neighborhoods (nb. *twa:s*, np. *toles*) but one, and proceeds past all the most important temples and public spaces (Gutschow 1982).

<sup>26</sup> It was said during the Malla period, that officials would count the cows so as to tell the number and type of people who died during the preceding year. More recently, five hundred were counted in 1988 (personal communication, Gert Wagner, August 1997).

<sup>27</sup> There is an exception to this with the Lākulāche(n) (sub)twa: As a climax to the festival, they enter themselves as group as well as anyone else who wants to join in the festivities. They carry a tall image of a cow float dressed as the god Bhairava (Levy 1990:445–46).



*Figure 2.* Large Cow Float in Bhaktapur's 1995 Gāi Jātra Festival. (Photograph by Greg Grieve, 1995)

indicate gender, age and personal tastes. Before each troupe enters the procession, the cow floats are worshiped as the Cow Goddess, and, in a process called “crossing the river” (nb. *tarae yagu*), she is asked to lead the deceased to heaven (Levy 1990:445).

An ideal “cow float” can be broken down into five sections. First, each float is led by a group of young children arranged in pairs doing the Stick Dance (nb. *Sāpāru Pyākhā*). Behind the stick dancers comes the second part of the troupe, which consists of costumed pairs of young men whom often perform the sexually explicit gestures. This

dance is often called Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) Mhetegu; a name that refers onomatopoeically to the special Cow Procession beat described below. During the dance, some men dress up as demons or as monsters and animals under mangy hides, some wear ludicrous masks or cover their faces with white cloth, while others paint their cheeks and foreheads in colored streaks and designs. Moreover, men cross-dress or dress out of their caste. Third comes a group of musicians and other people directly involved in the procession. Next comes the cow float itself, and, finally, come the family members, consisting of the chief mourner, his brothers, and the extended family, as well as friends and neighbors. This group also includes a fringe of women and girls following at the end of some of the larger processions.

Most of the troupes' members are higher caste men, but there is no concrete rule on who will participate, and a flexible strategy guides their actions. Recent festivals have witnessed the participation of more women, members of lower castes, and even foreigners. In addition, the cow floats vary depending on the age, caste, and gender of the deceased. The cows may either be long (for adults) or short (for children). The long cows consist of a cow mask mounted toward the top end of an elaborately decorated long pole and require four men to carry them. For upper castes, the cow float is carried by people who farm portions of the family's land, whereas for middle and lower castes, the float is carried by members of the extended family. The short cows, on the other hand, are baskets with a mask attached to them and are usually worn by a male child of the family; however, if a male child is not available, other male family members will wear it. Other features of the float's decorations indicate whether the deceased was male or female, what caste they came from, and what activities or foods they preferred. These decorations may include photographs, pieces of clothing, prepared food, personal items, and, for children, toys or schoolbooks displaying their favorite subject.

Crucial to these processions is the practice of "Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) *twa*," that indicates a special cymbal "Cow Procession beat." In fact, this beat (np. *mata*)—seven beats followed by a rest—defined the festival for most people. When I asked people to describe the Cow

Procession, not only did I usually get a verbal explanation, I was taught how to beat out this rhythm and do the accompanying dance. According to various Bhaktapurians, “Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) *twa*” not only refers to the special musical beat that is played only during the Cow Procession, but also has several sexual connotations as well, the main one referring to the insertion of the penis into the vagina during coitus. As an “everyday tantric practice,” public expression of such a “vulgar” utterance occurs only under circumstances that differ radically from people’s usual discourse.<sup>28</sup> To publicly speak of coitus outside of the carnival would lead not to the creation of distinction, but to social chastisement. This beat centers all the procession’s carnivalesque occurrences. For instance, in the Stick Dance, as the *twa* of Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) *twa* is chanted during the rest at the end of the rhythm, the boys hit their sticks together in unison. Similarly, the young men whom perform the sexually explicit gestures momentarily pause on the quarter rest to emphasize a particular gesture. In the weeks leading up to the Gāi Jātra, this rhythm can be heard more and more

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<sup>28</sup> On a philosophical level, tantra may be that Asian body of beliefs and practices that, working from the principle that the universe we experience is nothing other than the concrete manifestation of the divine energy of the godhead that creates and maintains the universe, seeks to ritually appropriate and channel that energy, within the human microcosm, in creative and emancipatory ways (David White, personal communication 1999; cf. Alper 1989; Bharati 1975; Brooks 1990; Goudriaan 1992; Svoboda 1986). Yet, as Hugh Urban has shown, there is no essential quality that is Tantra. Rather the term gains meaning in a discourse that has grown through circulation (Urban 2003). In Bhaktapur tantra is much more mundane. Krishna Pradhana(n)ga said: “Tantra is *śakti* which you can get from spiritual study. . . . It is different than visible physical power. Like the motor of a car. To move a car you need an engine, but tantra is different because it is run by god-*śakti*” (personal communication 1999). And as Ram Lochan Jhā said: “If we follow the tantra as it is described, it is a weapon which provides *śakti*. For example, I have a small home in Kathmandu. It is not my ancestral property. I bought it myself. A conflict started because of a piece of land behind it. The other person was a tantric, who treated people with his tantra-mantra and by being possessed by a spirit. And people felt that if he got angry, he could do black magic against them” (personal communication 1999).

often throughout the city, until, on the day of the actual event, the entire city is filled with its rhythmicity.

There is a final element of the procession that is key for understanding the “fake” goat sacrifice: these are the *khyāla*;, comic performances, which satirize dominant figures or voice political views that would be unutterable in other situations (Anderson 1971:103). For instance, on August 19, 1995, a man dressed as Yama (the god of death) rode backwards on a water buffalo. Surrounding the buffalo was a swarm of demon-costumed men menacingly waving long spears while simultaneously rubber-stamping piles of bureaucratic paperwork. The Yama procession probably was meant to represent the then current Communist government (UMLP), which had recently suspended parliament. And these “traditional” figures were probably led by members of the local Progressive Nepal Workers and Peasant Party (Ne-MaKiPa). In 1997, these parodic performances also included cartoons satirizing the parliament’s submission of an anti-terrorism bill. People also acted out skits lampooning members and leaders of parliament who were involved in misusing medical allowances. Besides these entertainments, the Cow Procession’s skits have opposed the American support of Israel, the infighting of the big Nepali political parties, corruption, lack of sanitation, and financial irregularities. Brahmins are also parodied; people engage in absurd and overly complex rituals or tell obscene versions of traditional stories. Tourists and other Westerners are also made fun of; revelers carry absurdly large replicas of cameras and hand out meaningless “funny money” to the crowd.

Beyond the actual day of the procession, the carnivalesque air continues during Gunhipunhi, which denotes the full moon day of the month of Gunla, but is often referred to in Bhaktapur as “nine full days” (“*gun*” meaning nine). Gunhipunhi is a time of jokes, satire, and social commentary. It starts the day before the Cow Procession on Kwati Purni, when a troop of musicians plays in Bhaktapur’s Durbar Square to announce to the public the opening of the Cow Procession, and lasts nine days, until the god Krishna’s birthday. It comes to a head the evening before Krishna’s birthday, when the city again engages in another long night of carnival. During this time, like in the *khyāla*;



people wear costumes and engage in political and social commentary. Like the fake goat sacrifice, much of this satire takes the form of forged ceremonies and processions.

*A Festive Juggernaut: The Cow Procession's Minimally Structured Generative Cultural Matrix*

When asked why they celebrated a forged sacrifice, Mr Gongah's son Sanjeev shrugged and said, "It's fun, isn't it?" (personal communication, 19 August 1995). When Mr Gongah was asked the same question he answered, "it's a way for the neighborhood to celebrate together" (personal communication, 19 August 1995). What connects Mr Gongah and his son's seemingly unrelated responses is "religious agency." By *agency* I am referring to peoples' ability to act effectively upon their world, to act purposively and strategically, in more or less complex interrelationships (Inden 1990:23).<sup>29</sup> In Bhaktapur, religion (*dharma*) glosses two chief meanings. On one hand, it means living a certain type of ethically bounded life style; on the other, religious practice focuses on the worship of god-images (*pūjā*) (Grieve 2003a).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> My use of the *everyday* stems from the work of Michel de Certeau (1984). The fundamental question of his oeuvre is how do people create themselves and lived worlds? His basic insight is that most social scientists have failed to describe accurately the everyday because they have assumed that the public is shaped by the products imposed on it from above.

<sup>30</sup> Although religion itself is a contested category, especially in relation to South Asia, it still offers the most productive means for articulating the geographic logics. Religion (np. *dharma*) glosses two chief meanings in Bhaktapur. On one hand, it means living a certain type of ethically bounded life style. As the high caste teacher Yogesh Raj stated: "The word *dharma* in Sanskrit means to do *dhāram*. In other words, Dharma is 'life style'" (personal communication, 5 May 1999). And as Uttam Jha replied to the same question, such life styles are concerned with ethics: "*Dharma* teaches moral responsibility and for people who are ethical, they don't need any *dharma*" (personal communication, 4 August 1999). Damodar Gautam replied: "People need to have boundaries, principles, rules and regulations. That is religion" (personal communication, 21 June 1999). On the other hand, religious practice focuses on the worship of god-images (np. *pūjā*) (Grieve 2003a). As Hari Govinda Ranjit said, *dharma* means, "you have to do good worship of god-images"

Accordingly, everyday religious agency theorizes how people in Bhaktapur not only imagine gods but use them in tangible practices that structure daily existence.

In Bhaktapur, festivals play a crucial role in the construction of lived worlds.<sup>31</sup> As the college teacher Yogesh Raj told me, “Because Bhaktapur is my [abstract] world (np. *loka*), when I participate in festivals I feel part of that [created] world (np. *saṃsāra*). Otherwise, I feel lonely” (personal communication, 6 February 1999). Such world construction can be theorized through the notion of generative matrixes, which are cultural “forges” that play a part in the construction of society. Generative matrixes emerge out of, and simultaneously generate, a group’s goals, strategies, and the resources available to a given social field. As such, generative matrixes are not neutral playing fields, but are defined by people’s access to what is at stake — cultural goods, housing, intellectual distinction, employment, land, power, social status, and prestige — and people’s ability to muster “social capital” (Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1996).<sup>32</sup> In short, not everyone feels the same entitlement to participate in festivals’ generative matrixes. For instance, while Mr Raj was a male Brahmin, women and lower caste individuals often felt alienated from participating. As the female college student Sangeeta Chitrakar said, “Which festivals do I participate in? Which festivals may women be part of? Can we participate in the

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(personal communication, 14 June 1999). And as Ma(n)gāl Laxmi Sāhi said, religion is done with “purified uncooked husked rice (nb. *kjiga*), a mixture of foods, including meat and fish (nb. *samhae*), flowers and fruit” (personal communication, 16 July 1999).

<sup>31</sup> See for example: Anderson 1971; Grieve 2002; Gutschow 1982; Levy 1990; and Vergati 1995.

<sup>32</sup> “Symbolic capital” amounts to status or recognition and refers to the connections and networks which an agent can call upon in their effort to achieve a specified goal. Social fields are distinct social spaces, such as the field of higher education, or science, or religious studies, which are so many games in which players pursue specific goals and ends. Each field, like a distinct game, has its own norms and logic; a specific “point” and stakes which players must incorporate within their corporeal schema if they are to play.

Cow Procession? Can we not pull the chariot during Biskā:? [laughter and the hand gesture for ‘what is to be done?’]” (personal communication, 11 May 1999 [cf. Parish 1994, 1996]).

Yet, while no religious agency is completely free of asymmetrical power relations, some are more flexible than others. In Bhaktapur, because the Cow Procession is the most minimally structured public celebration, marginalized social groups have the greatest access to its generative cultural matrix. During the Cow Procession there is a noticeable difference in the city: strict hierarchical boundaries and the city’s normally reserved nature soften under the weight of Carnival. Transvestitism, the grotesque, the obscene, and the nonsensical are celebrated. Those in power are derided.<sup>33</sup> Peoples’ laughter overcomes fear and allows the city to face up to its biggest fears—“death” being just the most evident. Hence, more than the mere cessation of productive labor, more than a ludic undermining of all norms, more than just “anti-structure,” the Cow Procession allows for the creation of new and the transformation of traditional social structures so as to forge innovative social worlds (Bakhtin 1984; Stam 1989).<sup>34</sup>

To comprehend *how* the Cow Procession creates the possibilities for new realities different from conventional rules and restrictions, let me turn to the participants. As I stated above, when asked why they celebrated a forged sacrifice, Mr Gongah’s son Sanjeev shrugged

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<sup>33</sup> Such derision is not merely symbolic—the cow procession is seen as a time of intensified political strife. The most obvious example is the Hyo(n)ju incident, in which Mr Hyo(n)ju—who was seen as a “turncoat” by many locals—was beaten into unconsciousness and later died in the hospital after been dragged around the procession route close to the time of the Cow Procession (cf. Grieve 2002:51–52; Câlise 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Aaron Gurevich (1985) problematizes Bakhtin’s understanding of medieval carnival. Gurevich argues that we need to be grounded in the “world picture” of the Middle Ages to understand their festivals. As such, we need to adjust our interpretive efforts—rather than arguing for the structural reversal and proceeding absurdity of festivals, we need to rethink such basic categories as time and space *in lieu* of Medieval reality. While I agree that Gurevich is correct, his observations do not necessarily affect my use of Bakhtin’s notion of carnival as a heuristic interpretative category.

and said, “It’s fun, isn’t it?” (personal communication, 19 August 1995). Yet, why is the Cow Procession fun? The obvious answer is that carnivals are entertaining because one can dance and drink, and “wear” personalities that one cannot at other times. As Mikhail Bakhtin writes in *Rabelais and His World*, during carnival there is a “temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers,” and there is an inversion of the standard themes of societal makeup (1984:15). As numerous Bhaktapurians told me, during the Cow Procession people can be whatever they want: anyone can be king for a day. This of course is not true in the strictest sense. In the past, both women and the lowest castes have been denied access to the festival’s merriments. A farmer who dresses as a king may feel himself empowered (and probably will enjoy himself), but he does not actually get to rule the city.

What makes the festival enjoyable then, is not an overthrow of the normative system, but its temporary loosening. Not only is this loosening enjoyable, it is key for understanding religious agency.<sup>35</sup> For, if maximally structured religious agency can be seen as ritualized, then the forged carnivalesque sacrifice can be understood as minimally structured.<sup>36</sup> Such minimally structured social practices allow for greater change and improvisation. Accordingly, carnivals are fun for the very reason they are useful for understanding agency. As Mikhail Bakhtin writes, they “extend the narrow frame of life” so that people can experiment with social configurations that “lie beyond the existing social forms” (1984:17, 280).

Yet, how is it that the Cow Procession became, in Bakhtin’s words, “the place for working out a new mode of interrelationship between individuals” (1984:123)? As is shown by the forged sacrifice, rather

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<sup>35</sup> One needs to theoretically differentiate between such concepts as Victor Turner’s “anti-structure,” and the minimally structured generative matrixes that are being analyzed here (cf. Turner 1967, 1969, 1972, 1985; also see Levy 1990:451). The fake sacrifice is more than just a liminal creation of *communitas* — it is the generation of a new social world. Moreover, while the Cow Procession may call into questions certain economic and political structures, it is not “liminoid” in the sense of existing outside of them (cf. Turner 1974).

<sup>36</sup> For instance, Levy defines it as an “anti-structural focal festival” (1990:451).

than re-enacting a symbolic structure, people are manipulating cultural logics to improvise a new social structure. Yet, all social practice — even that which is enjoyable and minimally structured — is socially mediated action. During the carnival one *cannot* do whatever one wants. Instead, the carnival emerges in a tug-of-war between needs, desires and goals, and the social logic of the festival. As such, the new realities are forged in the generative cultural matrix that stems from the interaction between the festival's social field and emergent collective action.

To concretize the Cow Procession's generative matrix, let me turn for a moment to the tug-of-war that occurs during Bhaktapur's Biskā: Festival (Levy 1990:468–98). Biskā: is one of Bhaktapur's three main festivals. It marks the start of the new solar year and is celebrated for the god Bhairava. During Biskā:, the upper and lower sections of the city attempt to pull Bhairava's forty-foot-tall festival chariot into their section of the city through tug-of-war and rock throwing (Figure 3). The tug-of-war and rock throwing demonstrate that there are two main elements to Bhaktapur's festival matrixes. On the one hand, festivals depend on religious agency. As the head of Bhaktapur's Chamber of Commerce said, "festivals are human-made things in which people participate according to their family religious duty (*dharma*)" (personal communication, 4 August 1999). Yet, while generated by people for a variety of reasons, festival matrixes are also social juggernauts. Festivals, while constituted by individual people's actions, often get out of hand and take on a life of their own.

The festival's social momentum becomes literalized when ropes are attached to both ends of Bhairava's chariot, and an immense tug-of-war ensues. As an individual agent in Biskā:'s tug-of-war — and in other ways in other festivals — one's individual agency is subsumed and transformed by the conjoining of the social forces involved. As Keshab Hada said about the Biskā: festival, "The main reason for the excitement is that many people ... both sides ... are pulling the chariot. When you see the people pulling, something emerges from inside yourself that makes you want to pull it" (personal communication, 5 May 1999). The "trick" for actors in a generative



*Figure 3. A tug-of-war over the God Bhairava's Chariot during Bhaktapur's 1997 Biskā: celebration. (Photograph by Greg Grieve, 1997)*

matrix is to strategically maneuver its practices so as to achieve one's own goals; that is, to get the juggernaut to go where you want it to go (without getting run over). Yet, what must be stressed is that these goals are generated in a circle of mutual dependency within the festival's cultural matrix. That is, the dialectic relationship between matrix and actor objectifies a social reality. As Peter Berger writes: "Society is a dialectic phenomenon in that it is a human product, and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts back upon its producer" (1967:3).

*From Abstract Symbols to Strategically Maximizing the Cow Procession's Generative Matrix*

Each different type of generative matrix, by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and assumed structure of necessity and relevance, which is both the product and producer of the practices that are appropriate to it. In Bhaktapur's Cow Procession three resources are at stake: honoring gods through ceremony, enjoying oneself, and

gaining prestige. First and foremost, festivals are understood as a way of honoring gods through ceremony (np. *pujā*). As Mr Hada put it, festivals are “huge ceremonies for gods and goddesses ... they create religious power (np. *śakti*)” (personal communication, 5 May 1999). Second, festivals are simply fun. As thirty-year-old Krishna Pradhānā(n)ga said, “Festivals refill the gods’ religious power (*śakti*), and also they are fun for people” (personal communication, 6 June 1999). In the elementary school principal Himalayaswar Mool’s words, “People work hard and they need a way to enjoy themselves. After fourteen hours of hard work, everyone gets tired. So that’s why we need festivals” (personal communication, 15 August 1999). Finally, festivals are a way to gain prestige (*ijjat*). As Uttam Jhā said, “The reasons for having festivals could be to respect gods, or it could be to show off in front of others” (personal communication, 4 August 1999).

How does a festival generate distinction, enjoyment and religious power? While the Cow Procession may not have codified “rules,” it does have definite “strategies” (Bourdieu 1986). This ability to strategically manipulate the festival is a ritual mastery that does not follow a codified set of rules, but is a flexible social sense for what is possible and effective; it is “the ‘art’ of *necessary improvisation*” (Bourdieu 1990:141 [*italics in the original*], cf. 106, 109). This necessary improvisation can be seen in the choice of cow floats. For instance, recently real living cows, which go undecorated except for a garland around their neck and a red *tika* on their forehead, have been introduced. These real cows are used more by lower classes (as money-saving devices, to save the expense of making an image) and are usually led around the procession route by a senior male, while a small boy holds onto their tails. Other family members follow close behind, collecting material offerings as they dance around the procession route. Besides the modest substitution of real cows, other changes have been introduced; for instance, a group of low caste participants manipulating the Cow Procession’s social field. Various people indicated that this was the first time that *dalits* (nb. *pore*) had directly participated in the festival, and that religion dictated that they should not. Although the higher castes seemed aghast, because of the carnival nature of the day and the demo-

cratic atmosphere created by the recent revolution, they seemed unable to counter the untouchables' deft strategic move.

The strategic manipulation of the festival field can also be seen in the Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) Mhetegu. Through the logic of inversion, participants used their costumes to display the particular concerns of their peer group. Younger men, roughly 18–35 years old, used symbolic gestures to mock dominant social positions (the government, tourists, and religious authorities), as well as to reverse the direction down (women and members of lower castes). They also took on pop-culture roles of Western rock stars and Hindi movie actors. In various sorts of sexual display, men dressed as heterosexual couples would embrace and move their hips as if engaging in coitus. Other pairs rhythmically banged together large models of penises and vaginas, whacking them together at the *twa* beat. Still other men simply added mock genitalia, such as bananas or cucumbers, to their normal clothes. A group of cross-dressers danced gracefully by themselves.

Yet, while there is “play” in the festival field's limits — not anything goes. For instance, the symbolic gesture displayed depends on the costume of the dancer. A young man dressed as a woman may repeatedly bring a baby doll to his breast, a man dressed as a bureaucrat may endlessly rubber stamp a pile of papers as another man repeatedly hands him a bribe, and, in the most prevalent example, a man dressed as a farmer's wife repeatedly serves her “husband” alcohol (see Figure 4). The revelers' dress can be divided into seven types: (1) people of all ages costumed as various deities; (2) young boys dressed as *sadhus* and other ascetics; (3) numerous other small boys costumed as Moghul Maharaja in orange cloth and turbans, a mustache penned above their upper lips; (4) dancers dressed as either photo-snapping tourists or American rock stars and Hindi movie actors; (5) people dressed as farmers who repeatedly hoe at the ground in time to the music; (6) people dressed as animals and demons; and (7) various obscene costumes (cf. Levy 1990:446–47).

The strategic manipulation of the festival's generative matrix is clear in the Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) *twa* beat described above. There are different songs involved (Widdess 1999). A quick *ghe(n)tān ghesi(n) twa*, a long





*Figure 4.* Cross-dressed celebrant in Bhaktapur’s Cow Procession repeatedly serves her “husband” alcohol. (Photograph by Greg Grieve, 1995)

*ghe(n)tān ghesi(n) twa*, and *Dhalhāegu* (a song that invokes the gods). The drum instructor Ranjitkar described *Dhalhāegu* as a telephone’s bell, a way of getting a god’s attention so you could talk with him or her. The slow version is used most of the time, but when the dancers want to be especially impressive, such as when passing in front of a major temple, through one of the large open squares, or past the Nepali television film crew, the fast version is played, and the troupe concentrates on the rhythm, complexity, and style of its dance moves. *Dhalhāegu* generally was saved for the most important temples, though

during the procession, the drummers held an ongoing discussion over which temples were important enough to deserve this song.

To illustrate a concrete Cow Procession troupe, let us turn to an example from the 1997 celebration that memorialized the Bhaktapur resident Bal Ram. As stated above, an ideal float can be broken down into five elements. Bal Ram's troupe, while based on the ideal form, varied from it considerably. In the troupe there were 150 people or more, making it the largest troupe of the day, as it stretched about 200 meters. At the front was a huge picture of Bal Ram, towering above Bhaktapur and with the mountain peak Langtang at his back. The picture had an umbrella over it. It was followed by a group of girls doing the stick dance. The girls were followed by people costumed as the ten incarnations of Vishnu. These were followed by the "international" Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) group—twenty American Peace Corps workers, twenty-five students from England, and some German volunteers from the homeopathic clinic. These were followed by the music instructors from the university, and finally five girls dressed in farmer's black saris sprinkling *baji*. Behind this was the cow or, in this case, a bull. Behind the bull was a musical group playing devotional songs. Taking up the rear came all the other mourners.

For various and diverse reasons, Kathmandu University's Music Department, Mr Gongah, a group of Peace Corps workers, and Bal Ram's family, all found it beneficial to cooperate on forming a very distinctive float. Distinction, in the simplest sense, is social status. Bourdieu shows how distinction involves cultural displays of dress, speech, and outlook (1984, 1988). Yet, during the procession there are no calcified rules for making distinction. For example, although not part of traditional practice, the Peace Corps workers were a hot commodity in the 1997 festival.

### *Maṇḍalization: World Generating Cultural Matrix*

We have illustrated the elements of the Cow Procession, as well as sketched some of its resources and strategies by which people utilize the festival. Yet, we have neither traced the "core" logic that assembles

its generative matrix nor mapped how it was manipulated by the fake sacrifice. This section of the paper briefly sketches *maṇḍalization*, and the following section traces how this world generating logic was put into play by the people of Suryavinayak.

In Nepal, one of the most important types of geographic logics can be defined as *maṇḍalic*. As has long been recognized, Nepal's landscape is *maṇḍalically* organized.<sup>37</sup> Music, hand symbols, people, festivals, ceremonies, temples, shrines, cities, and even the entire Kathmandu Valley are configured by *maṇḍalas*.<sup>38</sup> As Todd Lewis writes, "The internal order of Newar house, courtyard, neighborhood, city, and Valley—ideally integrated externally with excursions and internally through *dekhā* meditations—has a *maṇḍala* structure that orders and centers Newar life in many domains" (1984:558). Although in Sanskrit usage the word *maṇḍala* simply denotes the quality of being round—as expressed in everything from leprosy spots to the ring of neighbor-states surrounding a kingdom—in contemporary Nepalese usage, a *maṇḍala* is conceptualized as an arrangement of deities conceived of in a set and laid in a tantric "magical" diagram (*yantra*).

As can be seen in the Newar *paubha* "*Maṇḍala* Map of Bhaktapur" (*Yantrākāra khwopa dhya*) painted by Madhu Krishna Chitrakar, "maṇḍalization" is most readily apparent in magical diagrams (*yantras*), which configure geographic space (Figure 5). The basic *maṇḍala* cultural logic generates (1) a recognition of the four directions, (2) which are located at the periphery, and (3) a focus on the center. This "core" logic is tied to Bhaktapur's lived world by places of worship. That is, the symbolic images on the "map" correspond to physical spaces in the cityscape. In the "*Maṇḍala* Map" the four directions are indicated by the Lokapālas or Dikpālas, a group of "hyper-

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<sup>37</sup> The major evidence for this is the recurrence of patterns of four representations of certain gods places in such a manner as that they circumscribe the Kathmandu Valley (Gutschow 1982:21).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Dutt 1977; Gellner 1986, 1992; Levy 1990; Kramrisch 1946; Shepard 1985; Slusser 1982; Wheatley 1971.

real” deities that guard the four cardinal directions.<sup>39</sup> While they have no material places of worship in Bhaktapur, the Dikpālas are emplotted onto the landscape because their address is the imagined horizons.<sup>40</sup> The periphery of Bhaktapur is indicated on the *Maṇḍala* Map by the outer ring of mother goddesses (nb. *Piga(n) dya:*) whose open-air shrines surround the city.<sup>41</sup> Other boundaries are marked by the eight Ganeshas, ten Mahavidyas, and eight Bhairavas, which, while located in the map, have no clear location or representation in Bhakta-

<sup>39</sup> Lokapāla literally means “world-god.” Etymologically, Dikpāla stems from the notion of “dik,” which is a “spatial thing” derived from the root *-dis-*: “to point out, show exhibit.” As is written in the *Vaisesikasutra*, *dik* also means “that which gives rise to such cognition as ‘this is remote from that’” (cited in Grieve 2002). As a geographic logic, just as the indexicality of deictic pronouns tie speech to the world, the indexicality of the Dikpālas tie the “*maṇḍala* map” to a greater territory.

<sup>40</sup> On the “*Maṇḍala* Map,” these gods are indicated by the horizons. As Mr Chitrakar described the guardians of the cardinal directions (starting to the east at the top of the painting and moving clockwise), they are Indra (saffron), Yama (dark blue), Varuṇa (gray), and Kubera (yellow). Most manuscripts on the Dikpālas list eight or 10 of the deities, as illustrated in a copy of the *Sacitrapatrāni* from the National Archives of Nepal (ms. No 1.1314, reel no A 544/6).

<sup>41</sup> This is a pervasive South Asian representation of a boundary and its contained area within which ritual power and order are held and concentrated. Each of Bhaktapur’s eight mother goddesses has a sanctuary (np. *pith*) outside the city limits where she resides — usually in an unimpressive structure completely hidden in a thick grove of trees. This ring of *Piga(n) dya:s* creates a circumference that separates different worlds — the inside (nb. *pine*) order and the outside (nb. *dune*) disorder — and operates as a membrane which filters the flows into the city. The location and function of the *Piga(n) dya:* is clear in relation to present practice; the rest of the deities’ locations, however, are problematic. The goddesses are approximately at the eight points of the compass and the city center. For example, in the *maṇḍala* map the mother goddess’ shrines are symbolized as follows: Brāhamani, Maheśvari, Kumārī, Vaiṣṇavi, Vārāhi, Indrāṇi, Mahākālī, and Mahālaksmī. In addition, each Goddess has a god-house inside the city where an iconic image of her is kept, which is brought down and displayed during festivals throughout the year. Cf. Auer and Gutschow n.d. (mentioned in Levy 1990); and Slusser 1982, vol. 1. For a detailed map, see Gutschow and Klöver 1975).

pur's present religious life.<sup>42</sup> In the "*Maṇḍala* Map" the center zenith deity is the mother goddess Tripurasundarī, who is signified as both the cosmological zenith, and as the ruling goddess of the city.<sup>43</sup>

*Maṇḍalization* generates territorial boundaries that demarcate clear separate units, which hieratically emerge from the center. Moreover, verticality and elaboration of decoration also reproduce social hierarchy and decrease with the distance from the center (Gutschow 1982; Gutschow and Klöver 1975; Gutschow, Klöver, and Ishwaranand Shresthacarya 1987). In the past, such caste hierarchy was visually and materially manifest through sumptuary regulations which, while now not law, are still part of the cultural landscape (cf. Höfer 1979). Crudely sketched, the *maṇḍala* map demarcates concentric zones that are roughly identical with the hierarchy of the town's social topography. Closeness to the center indicates higher caste. For instance, on the *maṇḍala* map the central zone demarcated by the three Ganesh sanctuaries encloses the "ideal" residential quarters of the Brahmins. This quarter is also closely affiliated with the Malla palace, the center of political power. Other castes are plotted on the map according to prestige and statues in the Hindu caste system. Other artisans, butchers, scavengers and menial laborers are located outside the inner city, and some — like the Po(n) — even outside of the city proper.

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<sup>42</sup> However, they are reported to have esoteric functions in the ritual life of the city, and serve to mark out concentric circles from the center (Gutschow and Klöver 1975).

<sup>43</sup> The Goddess Tripurasundarī's shrine, that is pictured at the center of the map, however, has shifted slightly to the east. This probably occurred because there have been changes in the city's structure, both physically and politically, since it was first imagined through a *maṇḍala*. In the seventeenth century, the courts and its temple were moved to the present western site. At that time, Tripurasundarī lost her importance, and the court along with the new goddess Taleju were moved to their present location. In addition, one finds that the Mahālakṣmi shrine is further displaced from where it is "supposed" to be (Slusser 1982, 1:345ff.). Instead of being outside the boundaries, it is inside the city proper. Mr Chitrakar described the central mark of other *maṇḍala* paintings as either forms of the god Bhairava or of Vishvakarmā (Grieve 2002, 2003a).

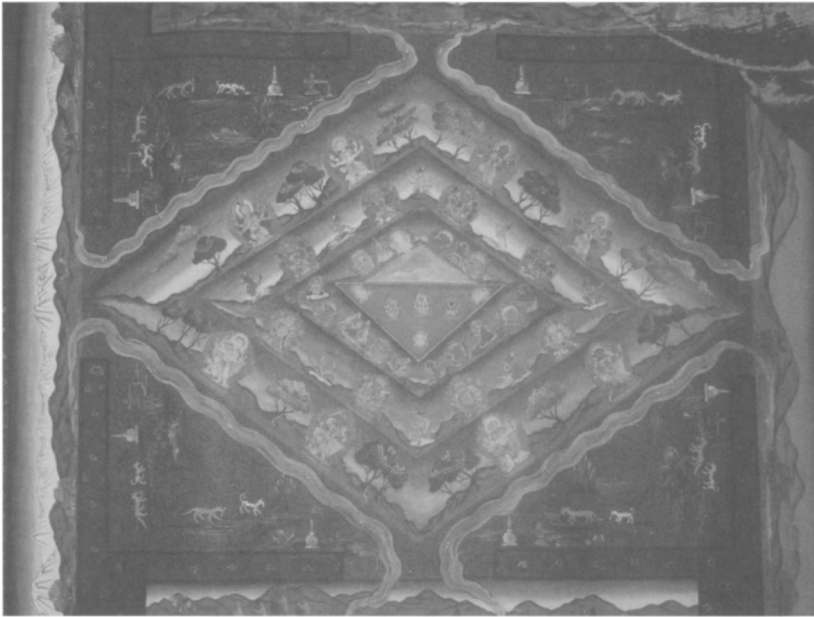


Figure 5. The “*Maṇḍala Map*” (*Yantrākāra khwopa dhya*) emplots a religiously organized space onto the cityscape of Bhaktapur, Nepal. (Painted by Madhu Krishna Chitrakar in 1997, and based on older prototypes [cf. Klöver 1976; Levy 1990:153].)<sup>44</sup>

The “symbolic meaning” of *maṇḍalas* has been well explored by Western scholarship (cf. Argüelles 1972; Jung 1972; Tucci 1961; to name only a few). Yet, if one attempted to understand such images as the “*Maṇḍala Map*” as “a circular diagram used for concentrating cosmic psychic energy,” one would be misled (Rawson 1973:211). Instead, as Alfred Gell argues for “non-western” art in general, to understand the efficacy of *maṇḍalas* for configuring space, one needs to analyze them as a form of religious technology (1992,

<sup>44</sup> Anne Vergati submitted a paper, titled “The Representation of Newar Towns in Paintings,” on this subject in a conference, held 19–22 June 2003 at the Institute of Indology and Central Asian Studies, University of Leipzig.

1993, 1998).<sup>45</sup> Gell's analysis correlates to the notion of the *maṇḍala* as a *yantra*, "a mystical diagram believed to possess magical or occult powers" (Stutley and Stutley 2003:347).<sup>46</sup> Simply, in the light of Gell's work, the "*Maṇḍala Map*" should not be reduced to either an aesthetically appreciated artwork, nor as a symbol that mimetically represents the city. Rather, it should be analyzed as a piece of religious technology by which Bhaktapur's traditional space is generated.

Using Gell's notion of cultural technology to understand the "*Maṇḍala Map*" is supported by the work of the French scholar of Asian religion Paul Mus (1975, 1998).<sup>47</sup> Mus argues that such objects as the "*Maṇḍala Map*" are not symbols that represent an ontological essence, but are rather a type of prototypical god whose ceremonies produce the lived territory of the city. He calls the geographic logic of the *maṇḍala* "cadastral," a term which refers to a public record, survey, or map of the value, extent, and ownership of land. According to Mus, what cadastral sign-objects have in common is that they are not merely symbols that represent the territory, but "blue-prints" on which the territory is based. As Mus repeatedly argues, the cadastral sign's "value was not conventional, but constructive" (Mus 1998:85). As such, the aforementioned *Maṇḍala Map* is perceived as a magical diagram (nb.

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<sup>45</sup> Gell quite consciously uses "primitive art" rather than "non-western" (cf. 1992:41 n. 1). For obvious reasons I retain non-western. In his final posthumous work, Gell attempts to generalize his theories to include "western" art work (1998).

<sup>46</sup> As Gell's work suggests, to understand religious art objects one needs to divorce one's analysis not only from notions of theology, but more importantly from the "cult" of aesthetic appreciation (Gell 1992, 1998). Gell's argument rests on two linked assertions. The first is that most non-western art is not primarily geared for "aesthetic" appreciation. The second is the rejection of linguistic analogies that have driven so many semiotic and symbolic analogies of art—that is, the axiomatic assumption that art is a matter of *meaning* and *communication*. Instead, Gell theorizes art as forms of technology by which people affect their world.

<sup>47</sup> For Mus, cadastral sign objects consist of such things as Buddha statues, *lingums*, and temples. Yet, for Mus, the cadastral object par excellence is the stupa, which he understands as a three-dimensional *maṇḍala* (Mus 1998).

*yantrākāra*) which produces the space of Bhaktapur (nb. Kwopa) as a god (nb. *dhya*).

What are the cultural logics by which such images configure the space of the city? Mus schematizes the cadastral cosmological generation in three interrelated positions: the divine, the sacred, and the human. The cadastral divine/sacred/human pattern involves a radical disjunction between the plane of the divine, which is constituted by the ineffable, and the plane of the sacred, which is constituted by the concrete sacrificial action that ceremonially produces it. On one hand is the ineffable divine; on the other is the human position. Between the two is the sacred, which, for the duration of the ritual, concretizes the divine by furnishing it with “eyes and ears” (Mus 1975:14; 1998:106).<sup>48</sup> The key to Mus’s cadastral theory of how such *maṇḍalic* space is generated is the logic of projection. For instance, to create the cadastral cosmos, the “*maṇḍala* map” projects two vectors: (1) a connoted “vertical” (↑) *nirvāṇic* and (2) a denoted “horizontal” (←→) *samsāric* aspect. It is through these two simultaneous projections (←↑→) that *maṇḍalic* territories are made.<sup>49</sup> Utilizing these two projections, the human group not only interacts with the divine, but also through the sacred, it “collectively . . . acquires its right to the land by means of this intermediary” (Mus 1975:44).

To map how the cadastral projections create territory, let me start with the divine signification. Through a connoted “vertical” element, the local cadastral deity is projected out of human intelligibility altogether. In such “*nirvāṇic*” semiotic acts, “understanding stops” in “unintelligibility” (Mus 1998).<sup>50</sup> In cadastral logic, the ultimately un-

<sup>48</sup> In Mus’s words, cadastral rituals, through a logic of rupture, “while opening up commerce with the beyond, did allow the problem of its ultimate nature to be avoided: [because] they were based on the refusal to mix the transcendent in our understanding” (Mus 1998:67).

<sup>49</sup> As Mus writes: “One [vector] is the description of *samsāra*, the other is the orientation towards *nirvāṇa*” (1998:327).

<sup>50</sup> Mus also refers to this as the *nirvāṇic* element. According to Mus, this creates a “mystery” whose significance in Buddhism is glossed by the term “*nirvāṇa*” (Mus 1936). *Nirvāṇa* is not merely an empty space, but a nowhere, a not-yet, a non-



knowable *divine* element is always just out of reach. It is a teleological point that can be pointed to, but never represented. Yet, this *nirvāṇic* “nothing” is key for producing religiously organized *maṇḍalic* space because this unknowable point is a zenith on which the cosmos is tethered.<sup>51</sup> In the Kathmandu Valley, such cadastral geographic logic has long been a way of organizing territory. For instance, a seventeenth-century manuscript, the *Dhyānasamuccaya*, lists the many-faced god Brahma, or Urdhva, as the guardian of the Zenith. A second god, Adha, is seen to rest in the nadir of the nether world (Nepal–German Manuscript Preservation Project, Reel no. E 916/20).

In the “*Maṇḍala* Map,” the center image is Tripurasundarī, and she is signified as both the cosmological zenith, and as the ruling goddess of the city. Mr Chitrakar described the central mark of other *maṇḍala* paintings as either forms of the god Bhairava or of Vishvakarmā (Grieve 2002, 2003a). Such zenith deities are crucial for the generation of cadastral space because they emplot religiously organized space onto the territory through a two-step process. First, a polar deity — such as Bhairava, Vishvakarmā and Tripurasundarī — is “piggy-backed” on the divine indexical projection upwards toward a “zenith” point (Mus 1998:274–76). This sky point, at the horizon of discourse (the edge of unintelligibility), is the overlap between the di-

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created space (1998:316). As Mus writes: “The *nirvāṇa* is neither existence nor non-existence, neither one and the other, nor the negation of the two” (1998:272). As Stephan Beyer has translated Nāgārjuna’s definition of *nirvāṇa*: it “isn’t is, (isn’t isn’t) isn’t is, and isn’t isn’t isn’t is and isn’t” (1974:214).

<sup>51</sup> For example, Mus gives the following analogy: “one wins a young girl’s love by acting on her footprints” (1998:67). In the same way as the young girl’s footprints are understood to draw one towards the object of desire, lotuses, wheels, and thrones are so many magical material *traces* that have a projective value (1998:109–10). For instance, a symbolic representation of the act of projection can be seen in the common South Asian symbol of the eight-petalled lotus. The lotus is an apt symbol because the flower is projected out of the muck of the earth. On it, an enthroned god is pushed above space and time (1998:268). As Mus writes, “at the center of all things, whence all things have been issued, Brahmā-Prajāpati, seated on the lotus of the ākāśa (sky)” (1998:269).

vine and human worlds' aspects. From the zenith point, the cadastral geographic logic projects out a horizontal this-worldly (*saṃsāric*) element, which produces the lived world.<sup>52</sup> Second, as described above, the horizontal this-worldly projection is "pinned" to the landscape through both material and virtual referents.

*Using Festival to Forge a Maṇḍala*

Suryavinayak is a new neighborhood about a five-minute walk outside Bhaktapur proper. It is part of a second wave of urbanization that has sprung up in the past fifteen years near the terminus of a trolley bus line that connects Bhaktapur with Kathmandu. However, the neighborhood did not blossom until about 1990, when building restrictions were eased, and money from tourism and other sources started to pour into the city. In 1995 the neighborhood was populated almost exclusively by Bhaktapurians from the other twenty-four wards of the city. Accordingly, it posed a problem for the ritual structure of the city. Not only for peoples' identities, but also for their placement in the social hierarchy. The people who live in Suryavinayak are usually upper caste and tend to be better off economically (they have to be able to afford a new home). In a sense, they are Bhaktapur's *nouveau riche*. However, in the *maṇḍalic* cultic structure of the city, because they live outside the pale, they are literally outcasts.<sup>53</sup>

The festival's flexible minimal structure is so important to people from Suryavinayak because the religious strategy usually used by most people in the neighborhood to deal with this "out-caste" status is to

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<sup>52</sup> Mus illustrates such *saṃsāric* centers of significance again utilizing the symbol of the lotus, which he describes as not just suspended above time and space, but also the center polar point which generates a particular *saṃsāra*. As Mus writes: "The lotus by its petals, being equivalent to an explicit schema of the directions of space, which its central plateau dominates as does the cosmic peak up to which the Master ascends and commands the cardinal direction" (1998:270).

<sup>53</sup> This has changed since 1995. Currently, because of the influx of carpet factories and other small scale industry, many lower income low-pay wage earners have come to live in the area. These people are usually not Newar and come from India and from the lowlands of Nepal.

celebrate the major festivals in their ancestral wards. For example, during most festivals, the Gongah family returns to Bhaktapur's Khauma ward. The reason for this is simple. Most of Bhaktapur's major festivals do not have any strategy for the Suryavinayak neighborhood to participate as a group. However, the Cow Procession, within a minimally structured generative matrix, created the perfect opportunity for the inhabitants of Suryavinayak to work together as a community. Accordingly, Suryavinayak entered one of the largest, best decorated, and most costly of the Ghunipuni festival processions. This procession marched loudly and triumphantly around Bhaktapur's circumambulatory route and asserted that Suryavinayak was part of the city, thus forcing itself into the city's cultic structure.

Yet can a forged sacrifice still create a *maṇḍala*? If what is important is mechanical reproduction of structure, then no. Yet, if what is important is the strategic use of generative matrixes, then yes. While the 1995 "forged" goat sacrifice was an improvisation, it was patterned on "authentic" practices. For instance, before the actual forged sacrifice was done, a troupe of Cow Procession dancers first led the goat around Bhaktapur's festival route and then to the temple. The troupe then worshipped the victim and affixed colored pigments and flowers to its body and head. They then made gestures of respect and chanted a special beast mantra. People waited for the sign of assent — a shaking of the goat's body. At first, the goat seemed to be reluctant, so sacred water, uncooked rice, and flowers were thrown on its body. Still, it would not give its consent, so sacred water was splashed in its ears. Finally, the goat made the proper bodily shaking movement (the same head-to-tail movement that a dog will make to dry itself off). The actual "cutting" took place, and, after the obligatory photographs, there was a feast.

So how was the sacrifice forged? During the sacrifice, when I asked Mr Gongah what we were doing, I was told that we were performing a Dewālī feast for the Cow Procession. Hearing this, I was confused, as Dewālī feasts are usually performed in the spring as a way of cementing the relations of an extended family group through the worship of a lineage deity. Our "forged" Dewālī goat sacrifice was held neither

in the spring nor for an extended family group by an extended family group, but rather in August, by the neighborhood of Suryavinayak, for the Cow Procession. At the time of the sacrifice, I asked Mr Gongah's son Sanjeev why the neighborhood was celebrating a Dewālī celebration when it wasn't spring and when we weren't an extended family group. He smiled and said, "Because we feel like it." Later that night, still confused, I brought up the question again with Mr Gongah. At that time, we were watching a program on professional wrestling. He wanted to know if the wrestling was real, and I told him that it was fake. The fake wrestling got us talking about the sacrifice. He said that the sacrifice at Suryavinayak was *real*, and that the feast was *real* but at the wrong time; therefore, they were forged. Moreover, he said that they had had the feast because it was the only time the neighborhood could come together. He added that the feast was held at his house as a kind of honor, since it should have been held somewhere else, such as a mother goddess shrine. He had become the *Nāyā:*, or head of this *ad hoc* forged religious organization (nb. *guthi*). The goat sacrifice was considered to be forged not because the victim was spared or because the ritual was faulty, but because it was the *right* festival at the *wrong* time.

But why was it important to celebrate the right festival at the wrong time? The Suryavinayak festival goat sacrifice was a ceremony that occurred during the Cow Procession's Gunhipunhi. During the last evening of these nine full days, people celebrate whatever they want: some create brand new festivals, others undergo fictive rites of passage (*samskāra*) and marriages, and still others celebrate festivals that should be conducted at other times of the year. In a giant cacophony, the many different festivals bump and intertwine their way around the procession route. The music and dance alternate between that which is proper for each forged procession and the ever-present beat of Ghe(n)tān Ghesi(n) *twa*. Again, men dress in costume, the satirical element being much more prevalent than during the Cow Procession proper. But, come midnight and the ringing of the bell that marks the start of Krishna's birthday, the period of carnival ends and the city returns to normal.

The expense and effort of the forged sacrifice was a way for the neighborhood to claim its right to Bhaktapur's *maṇḍalic* territory. Yet, for this claim to stick, other practices also had to be "forged." For instance, the neighborhood's *maṇḍalic* value was also heightened by the strategic use of the goat sacrifice and the Dewālī feast. Each of Bhaktapur's twenty-four wards has a Ganesha temple at its center where most ritual activity for the area takes place. The Suryavinayak neighborhood lacked such a temple and, instead, appropriated the Suryavinayak temple as its neighborhood center. (During 1996, a new Ganesh shrine was built in the center of the vicinity.) The Suryavinayak temple is traditionally not associated with any particular ward or even with Bhaktapur itself, but instead is one of four Ganesha shrines that circle the greater Kathmandu Valley. By doing the sacrifice at this temple, the members of the neighborhood strategically borrowed the deity and used it to give their own neighborhood a *maṇḍalic* center.

The Cow Procession's festival practices were also used to spread their version of reality throughout a larger territory. A clear expression of this is through the use of material offerings. During the Cow Procession people along the procession route hand out *kiga*: (uncooked rice) to the troupe. As the troupe proceeds around the city, its members are also offered material offerings of fruit, water, rice, sugar, and alcohol spirits (np. *raksi*, nb. *aelā*). Simple refreshments are offered by many households, and more complicated offerings are given by people in mourning, as well as by the neighborhood and other charitable associations.

Beyond the creation of a center, material offerings were used in the forged Dewālī feast to impose a social structure modeled on an extended family hierarchy. A Dewālī feast is usually a way of cementing the relations of an extended family group through the worship of a lineage deity. By appropriating the Ganesha image and contextualizing it in the ritual structure of a Dewālī ritual (a ritual normally undertaken for the extended family), the neighborhood in effect imposed this extended family structure onto the neighborhood. This contextualization included the creation of a hierarchy through the disruption of the *siu*, the eight parts of the goat's religious capital-filled

head. As I described above, after the sacrifice, the goat's head was cut off and placed on a metal offering plate that also contained other food items. This plate was then set in front of the Ganesha image as food. After the mandatory photos, members of the troupe then took the head, flowers, and rice back as material offerings. These material offerings were then brought back to the Gongah home for the feast that followed. Toward the end of the feast, as everyone was sharing in the sacrificial meal of goat meat, the head was divided into eight parts, and these were distributed in a hierarchical fashion to the eight highest ranking social members of the group. These portions (*siu*) are hierarchically arranged in descending importance: right eye, left eye, right ear, left ear, nose, tongue, right mandible, and left mandible. Thus, the symbolic capital created by the forged goat sacrifice, and transmitted through the material offerings, was used to make an imagined world real.

*Conclusion: Forging Maṇḍalic Realities*

At first, the forged goat sacrifice may have seemed an enigma. Why would anyone go to the time and expense of partaking in forged religious practice? What could one hope to gain? Yet, as we have seen, Cow Procession troupes do not fall from the air fully formed. Rather, they are shaped by a loose cooperation among kith and kin, neighborhood groups, as well as other city-wide and national institutions. In short, the outcome of the festival's generative matrix is not mechanical reproduction of prior rules. Nor is it created whole cloth, the pure intentional fabrication of individuals. Instead, now that we have, at least in theory, danced and drunk our way around Bhaktapur's procession route, we find that tradition can also be improvisational and creative. That is, the Cow Procession is a highly politicized generative matrix in which various groups attempt to improvise with the traditional cultural logics to create a society most in conformity with their interests.

Or more to our current question, if we situate the forged sacrifice in the Cow Procession's generative matrix, we find that the people of Suryavinayak performed the sacrifice to "stretch" the traditional

space of the city by “forging” a new *maṇḍala*. The forged sacrifice is significant, then, because it demonstrates that traditional religious cultural logics, like *maṇḍalization*, are not static essences that move unchanged across time and space. Moreover, while in Bhaktapur the roots of some of these religious practices, such as the Cow Procession, can be traced to pre-modern times, they are archaic neither in the Enlightenment sense of being outmoded nor in the Romantic sense of being static and timeless. They are adaptive and improvisational, being shaped and reshaped in response to changing circumstances and new situations. Such creative elements problematize theories that posit religion (and especially Hinduism) as blind repetition and thus strips people of their agency, and thereby distorts the role gods play in South Asia. In such perennial understandings, at best people are posited as carriers of a reified religion as it is abstracted in a stable and immutable set of scriptures or as the reflection of a preexisting ideology. At worst, religion is dismissed as distorting superstition. Moreover, perennial theories of Hinduism create an epistemological reduction in the material by dictating what material is proper for study, and also limit the interpretation of this material to a reified brahmanic understanding. In short, what causes perplexion is not the goat sacrifice, but rather the available theories by which it can be interpreted. Yet, as soon as one interprets celebrations such as the Cow Procession with a theory of religious agency, any perplexity falls away. What is left are clear indications of peoples’ creative and improvisational use of traditional culture.

Still, while not blind imitation, the sacrifice was patterned on past tradition. What the Cow Procession demonstrates then, in an oblique Marxist sense, is that, while people make their own reality, they do not make it just as they please. And they make it not under circumstances they themselves have chosen, but under circumstances found, given, and historically transmitted. As the goat sacrifice shows, people do have a choice in what they do and imagine. Yet, these choices are not completely random or unencumbered. In the tug-of-war between goals and possibilities, what the Cow Procession shows is that one of the most important uses of tradition is to forge new lived worlds. This

implies neither a dichotomy with modernity, the holding of radically different views, nor even overt conflict and struggle. It does imply, however, that by cobbling together the divine, people can improvise so as to fashion new lived realities based upon traditional models.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat. Religionswissenschaftliche Analyse zu Diaspora am Beispiel von Hindus auf Trinidad* (Religionswissenschaftliche Reihe 18) — Marburg: diagonal-Verlag 2003, (356 p.), ISBN 3-927165-83-2 (pbk.) €30.00.

Martin Baumann, now holding the Religionswissenschaft chair in Lucerne/Switzerland, represents a new type of research-methods among German Religionswissenschaftler: no longer philologists or historians, they are now gathering and analysing sociological data. Diaspora communities are valuable objects of research because they are small in number, are easily identified, with a history of but few generations. They had clearly identifiable reasons to leave their homeland (that pushed them) and dreams of their new dwelling (that pulled them), but nevertheless they brought their old gods with them. B. has chosen for his monograph (a Habilitationsschrift at the university of Leipzig) the Hindu Diaspora on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. In admirably concise and well laid out chapters he sets out the waves of immigrations from 1845 onwards, organized in generations of some 20–30 years. The beginnings, as a sort of temporary slaves; later, from an ethnic perspective as an Indian community; then, after World War II, becoming a local identity of Trinidad Indians with new local inventions of what Hindu religion might be in Trinidad, where, with some 25 percent of population they face 70 percent of Christians. Christians in 1946 were dominated by Anglicans (nearly 25%, though in 1990 their share had fallen to just 11%), whereas in the same period “other Christian” communities grew to some 16% (p. 225). That means differentiation, plurality, individual choice; the heretical imperative?

A sociological approach is apparent throughout the study. Nevertheless, B. begins his study, after having defined the term (p. 9–50), with a typological and historical study of what diaspora means. He refers to Greek colonization, the ancient Jewish history, and the ancient semantics of the term (p. 51–109). Besides the negative meaning of the term that prevailed after the destruction of the Temple, it should be emphasized that there is a positive one (e.g., Philo, *Leg.* 214). Focusing on the migrating religions on Hinduism, B. sets out how under the impact of the British Empire the religions in India were



conceived as a unit and how the Indians migrated to East Africa and the Caribbean islands (p. 110–161). B. chooses the island of Trinidad, where the first workers arrived in 1845. His evidence is mostly the official census, studies of Hindus on Trinidad, and also his own fieldwork on the island. Chapter 5 analyses the data. The concluding chapter shows the rich insights one gets for the study of religion in general through the analysis of diaspora communities (p. 277–306); it also shows how new religions establish and form institutions (p. 299–306).

B. has published a model for further studies on religion in the context of migration, pluralism and transcultural situations. Although I would have preferred a model less burdened by a specific history and by the notion of ‘homeland,’ B. does not use ‘diaspora’ narrowly. In analysing our modern or post-modern situation, instead of being concerned with religious traditions and their beginnings, based on fieldwork, B. approaches the transformations of religions as part of local cultures. Baumann’s *Diaspora* will become a reference book.

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CHRISTOPH AUFFARTH

Peter Schäfer, *Mirror of his Beauty. Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah*—Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press 2002, (306 p.), ISBN 0–691–09068–8 (cloth) £19.95.

The present work by one of the main scholars in the study of ancient Judaism presents a fascinating and comprehensive exploration of the idea of a feminine divinity. Schäfer’s starting point is the oldest document of the kabbalistic movement, a small book titled the *Bahir* (light) emerging at the end of the twelfth century in Provence. The image of God in this book includes a female divinity as a mediator between the Jews and God as well as a part of the Godhead itself. Focusing on this aspect Schäfer first examines the wisdom tradition starting with the Bible (canonical and non-canonical books), moving from Philo and the gnostic literature to the *Bahir*. During this walk through the history of ancient Judaism he finds some precedents for the Kabbalah’s feminine divinity, such as the female wisdom as God’s beloved daughter (Proverbs) or even his spouse (Wisdom of Solomon).

In Philo, the early Jewish wisdom tradition and the gnostic transition the Godhead contains a feminine power playing a prominent role in myths of creation or as part of the network between God and the human world. In the book *Bahir*, which appears as the kabbalistic counterpart to the rationalistic Jewish philosophy of authors such as Judah ha-Levi or Moses Maimonides the kabbalistic notion of God's femininity seems like a radical departure from earlier Jewish models. Analysing the relevant motives for this change Schäfer points out that the concept of the Shekhinah, found in the *Bahir*, seems to be close to the gnostic myth. But no historical connection between the "Gnosis" and the *Bahir* can be established. Schäfer finds the main starting-point for this concept in the immediate Christian context of the *Bahir* itself: the veneration of the Virgin Mary in twelfth-century France. Texts like the Marian doctrines of Peter Damian (1007–1072) or Herman of Tournay (ca. 1090–ca. 1147) show striking parallels to the increased emphasis on the feminine aspects in the Kabbalah. The role and function of the Christian Mary comes — so the main thesis of the author — very close to the role and function of the Jewish Shekhinah in the *Bahir*. Therefore, the re-emergence of God's femininity in Judaism was influenced by similar developments in Christianity.

This provocative but convincing thesis leads to another view on the relationship of Judaism and Christianity in the Middle Ages. Schäfer shows that both religions are far from being static and constituting distinct entities. He also raises the question of the historical channels of supposed mutual influences. Jews and Christians in 12th century France participated in the same society and there were numerous points of contact and tangency. This circumstance also leads to a discussion of the methodological question concerning the nature of categories such as "origins," "dependence" or "influence." A dynamic model of "influence," designed by Peter Schäfer, shows that the paradigm of religious discourses leads to another view of the history of religions.

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BERND U. SCHIPPER

Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* — Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003, (459 p.), ISBN 0-19-826733-9 (cloth) £70.00.

The present publication sums up the results of Fishbane's work on the phenomenon of mythopoesis, one of his – as he said – “oldest and most enduring intellectual passions” (VII). The book deals with the afterlife (“Nachleben”) of biblical myth and mythmaking in classical rabbinic literature from the Graeco-Roman period (Midrash and Talmud) and in mystical Jewish texts from the thirteenth century (the book of Zohar). Fishbane links this first comprehensive history of myth and mythmaking from the Bible up to the Middle Ages to the issue of the significance of myth in monotheism: myths do occur in biblical and rabbinic literature, but only as faded fragments, metaphorical concepts, or figurative embellishments and no actual ontological validity can be detected. Nevertheless, the notion of the myth is suitable for developing a comprehensive “meta-theory for the history of religions” (12).

The methodical approach of Fishbane's work is the distinction between myth and the making of myths, the “mythopoesis” which assumes a wide understanding of the notion of ‘myth.’ He defines myth as a narrative of power, with its meaning or nature to be determined case by case. Therefore Fishbane differentiates three kinds of myth: the divine combat (the battle of divine power and pre-eminence against other forces), divine wrath and sorrow (the emotional polarities of the divine personality), and the sympathetic identification (peculiar to the Hebrew Bible is, however, the relative separation of the divine and human realms). These three kinds are also to be found in Jewish monotheism, yet in a modified form: “Monotheistic myth is the product of an artful mythmaking” (16). For an analysis of the mythopoesis in Hebrew literature, three principles of evaluation seem to be significant: the principle of context and meaning (there is no abstract myth, but many mythic topics contextualised differently, 16f.), the reuse of myths (they appear in different sources and move from context to context, 20), and the multiplicity of variants (22).

The text analysis itself (I. Biblical Myth, II. Rabbinic Myth and Mythmaking, III. Jewish Myth and Mythmaking in the Middle Ages) makes it clear that Fishbane concentrates on two aspects: regarding content he deals with the issue of distinction of divine and human spheres (theosphere and biosphere); in methodical terms he focuses on the reception, the recapture and the modification of tradition. Thus the three stages of myth and mythmaking

represent three different readings of Scripture and its traditions (27). At each stage tradition reverts to these principles, in the Hebrew Bible it is the wider Near Eastern context (as evident in the combat myths in the psalms and the prophetic literature), in the Midrash and the Talmud it is the Canon (which acts as new literary thesaurus for the myth), whereas in Zohar it is the older transmission. In this context a remarkable change of the notion of theosphere and biosphere can be observed. While in the Hebrew Bible God the Creator rules in heaven and on earth, rabbinic literature gives evidence of a magnification of the Lord's dominion in the highest heaven. On the other hand, for the mystic in the book of Zohar the biosphere presents really a modality of the all-embracing theosphere (309).

Fishbane's work offers a fascinating overview of nearly two thousand years of religious and literary history. He proves conclusively that the three "collections of tradition are culturally linked and interrelated," and he demonstrates that mythmaking has been an ongoing process of production, reception and transformation. But what are the decisive factors and which sources are being used? Fishbane himself emphasizes the much more complex lines of tradition and the mythical themes that have found their way to the rabbinic literature without passing through the Hebrew Bible. The theme of a divine battle against the "primordial dragon, and the function of its death as a key component in the creation of the ordered world" appears for example in the book of Zohar without any prior trace in biblical or midrashic texts. These sources, however, are dealt with only marginally and the socio-cultural factors which led to the change of the tradition are hardly taken into account either. Although Fishbane does state that similar textual conditions and religious mentality may produce similar mythic images, he does not go further into the question of the historical (diachronic) position of the texts. He considers myths as cultural forms and concrete expressions of a vital mythic imagination.

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## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

### *Books*

(Listing in this section does not preclude subsequent reviewing)

Sedgwick, Mark, *Against the Modern World. Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*—Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, 370 p., \$35.00, ISBN 0–19–515297–2 (cloth).

Glazier, Stephen D. and Charles A. Flowerday (eds.), *Selected Readings in the Anthropology of Religion. Theoretical and Methodological Essays*—Westport, CT/London, Praeger, 2003, 291 p., £37.99, ISBN 0–313–30090–9 (cloth).

Dentièrre, Marie, *Epistle to Marguerite de Navarre and a Preface to a Sermon by John Calvin*. Edited and translated by Mary B. McKinley—Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2004, 120 p., £13.00, ISBN 0–226–14279–5 (pbk.).

Dadosky, John D., *The Structure of Religious Knowing. Encountering the Sacred in Eliade and Lonergan*—Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 2004, 185 p., US\$ 50.00, ISBN 0–7914–6061–4 (hb.).

Feldman, Louis H., “Remember Amalek!” *Vengeance, Zealotry, and Group Destruction in the Bible According to Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus*—Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press (distributed by Wayne State University Press), 2004, 272 p., US\$ 34.95, ISBN 0–67820–455–5 (cloth).

Jackson, William J., *Heaven’s Fractal Net. Retrieving Lost Visions in the Humanities*—Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2004, 311 p., \$29.95, ISBN 0–253–21620–6 (pbk.).

von Glahn, Richard, *The Sinister Way. The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*—Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 2004, 385 p., \$55.00, ISBN 0–520–23408–1 (pbk.).

*Īśvara Pratyabhijñā Kārikā of Utpaladeva. Verses on the Recognition of the Lord.* Translation and Commentary by B.N. Pandit. Edited by

Lise F. Vail — New Delhi, Muktabodha Indological Research Institute/  
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2003, 249 p., Rs. 595, ISBN 981-208-  
1785-0 (hb.).

Verardi, Giovanni and Silvio Vita (eds.), *Buddhist Asia 1. Papers from the  
First Conference of Buddhist Studies Held in Naples in May 2000* —  
Kyoto, Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2003, 245 p., ISBN 4-  
900793-22-1 (pbk.).

Martikainen, Tuomas, *Immigrant Religions in Local Society. Historical and  
Contemporary Perspectives in the City of Turku* — Åbo: Åbo Akademi  
University Press, 2004, 288 p., ISBN 951-765-179-1 (pbk.).

Olsson, Birger and Magnus Zetterholm (eds.), *The Ancient Synagogue from  
Its Origins until 200 C.E. Papers Presented at an International Confer-  
ence at Lund University, October 14-17, 2001* — Stockholm, Almqvist  
& Wiksell International, 2003, 571 p., SEK205, ISBN 91-22-01935-9  
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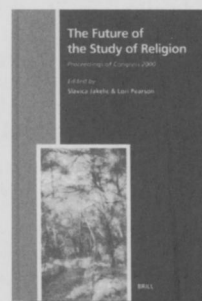
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**Slavica Jakelić**, Ph.D. (1997) Boston University, is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Center on Religion and Democracy, University of Virginia. She has edited (with J. Varsoke) *Crossing Boundaries: From Syria to Slovakia*, (IWM, Vienna 2003).

**Lori Pearson**, Th.D. (2002) Harvard University, is Assistant Professor of Religion at Carleton College. She has published various articles on Ernst Troeltsch.

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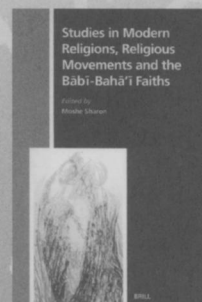
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**Moshe Sharon**, Ph.D., is Professor of Islamic History at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He has published many books and articles on a variety of subjects on medieval Islam and Arabic epigraphy. His most recent publications are *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2* (Brill, 1997/1999), and *Colloquial Arabic of Palestine*, (Jerusalem, 2003).

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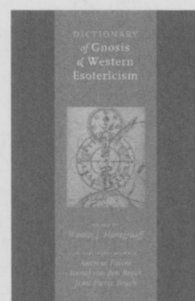
B R I L L

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**Wouter J. Hanegraaff**, is Professor of History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. He has published extensively on modern and contemporary Western esotericism, including a book devoted to the 15th-century Christian Hermetist Lodovico Lazzarelli and a monograph on the New Age movement.

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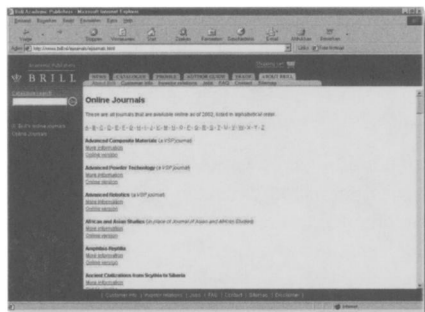
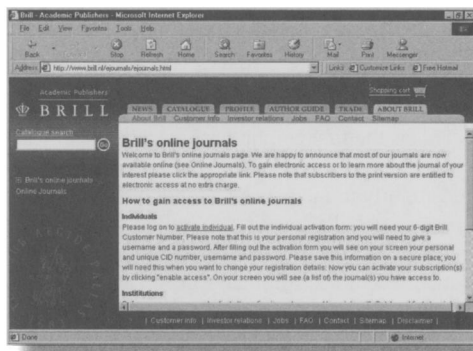
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